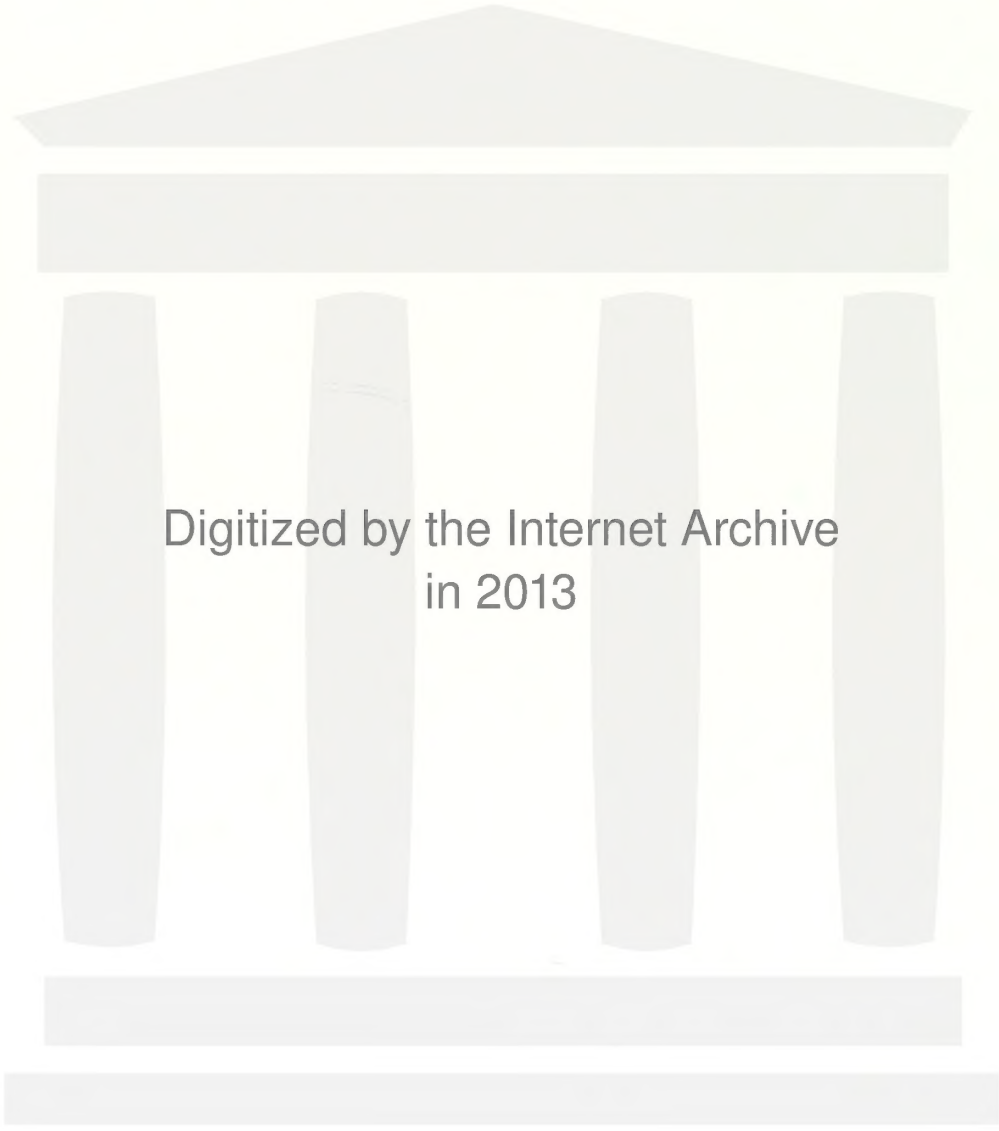

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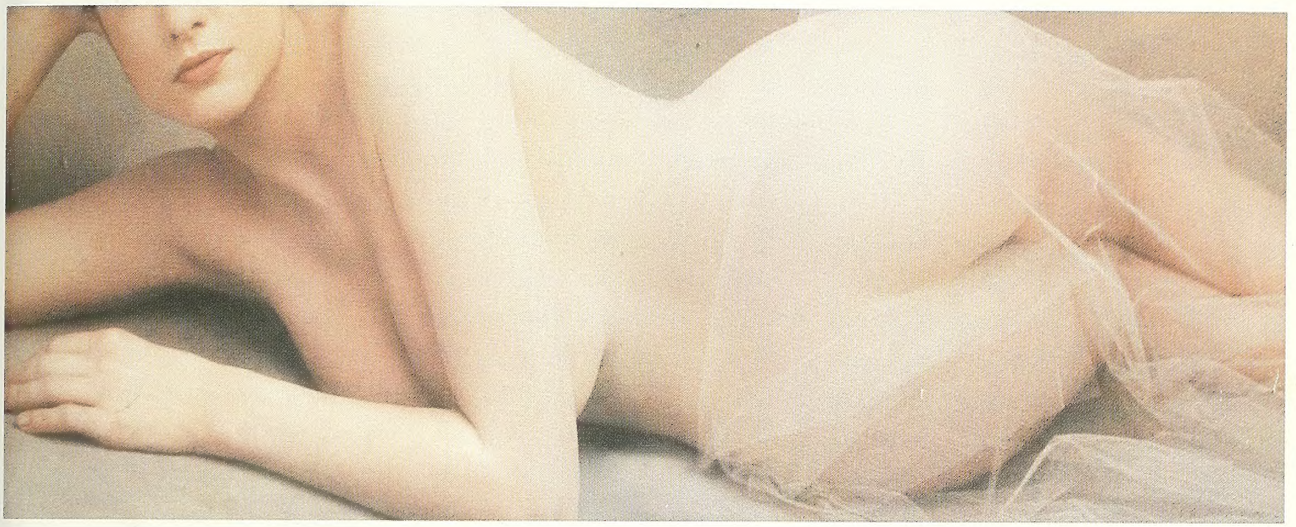
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HARPER'S



VIOLENT CERTAINTIES

A Report from a Milwaukee Abortion Clinic, Where the Crowd Outside Brandishes the Weapons of Righteousness and the Women Inside Bear the Weight of Their Choice

By Verlyn Klinkenborg

◆

BRIGHTNESS VISIBLE

On Learning to See the Gravity of Bears and the Wonder of Beetles

By Edward Hoagland

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PRUM

A Curious Tale of Power, Prophecy, and Cargo in the South Pacific

By Will Bourne

Also: Alan Lightman, Umberto Eco, Richard Rorty, and a Left Bank tête-à-tête on ugliness and desire

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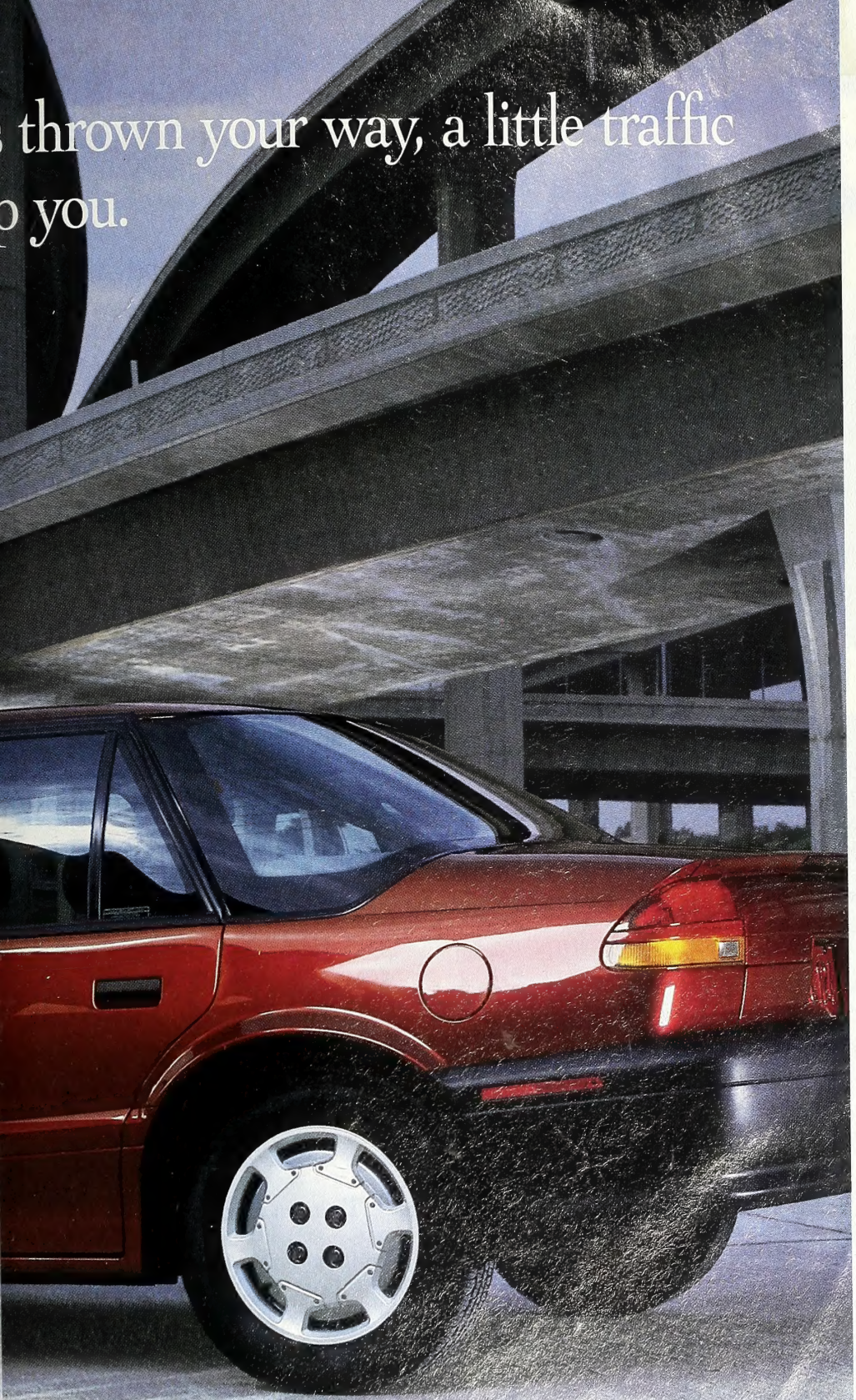
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Later, at the Saturn retailer, June found the whole experience was so easy that she made a decision to buy right on the spot. Impulsive behavior for a scientist of June's stature. But you can't spend your whole life in a laboratory. A lot of it (just ask June), you spend in traffic. And you might as well enjoy it.



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LETTERS

Spilled Milk?

In his article "How Now, Drugged Cow?" [October], Tony Hiss speeds up the demise of those he seeks to protect, the small dairy farmers of Vermont, by becoming yet another media conduit for anti-biotechnology activists who have chosen food terrorism as their strategy to defeat recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbST), the protein hormone used to increase milk production.

In talking about a milk stream "treated" with bovine growth hormone (or BGH, as the activists like to call it), Hiss implies that rbST is added to milk. Rather than an additive to milk, rbST is given to cows as a supplement to the bST naturally present in their bodies. Milk from bST-supplemented cows is identical—in taste, smell, and nutritional value—to milk from non-supplemented cows. All milk contains traces of BST and always has.

In raising the specter of drug residues in milk, Hiss fails to state that the four antibiotics monitored by the FDA 100 percent of the time are used in 90 percent of cow treatment. Further, he cites 1989 data from a *Wall Street Journal* survey of 50 cartons of milk when there is 1993 data available from a study of 1,700,000 tankers of milk. The latter survey found that 0.07 percent of the sample surpassed the levels of antibiotic residues set by the FDA, and that milk was destroyed.

Elsewhere in his article, Hiss states, "In the month BGH was [illegible] proved for public consumption, [illegible] sales across the country dropped [illegible] matically." According to the U[illegible] Department of Agriculture, f[illegible] milk sales in February 1994, [illegible] month rbST went on sale, were [illegible] tually up 0.05 percent from Febr[illegible] 1993. Sales for the year through [illegible] 1994 were down a mere 0.1 per[illegible] from the same period in 1993. [illegible] is hardly a dramatic drop.

The Dairy Coalition, which [illegible] resents the majority of U.S. [illegible] producers and processors, nei[illegible] endorses nor opposes the us[illegible] rbST by American dairy farm[illegible] What the Dairy Coalition *is* p[illegible] posed to is misinformation ab[illegible] the safety of the milk we supp[illegible] the American public. It is [illegible] through a serious challenge of [illegible] misinformation that we can pre[illegible] an "Alar-like" disaster from hit[illegible] the dairy industry.

E. Linwood Tipton, President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association
James C. Barr, CEO
National Milk Producers Federa[illegible]
Washington, D.C.

In his article on the bovine gr[illegible] hormone, Tony Hiss dismisses [illegible] benefits of increased milk produc[illegible] due to BGH. He argues that bec[illegible] there is a milk oversupply, consu[illegible] must be buying all they want [illegible] that lower prices due to BGH v[illegible] affect buying habits. This ana[illegible] overlooks the role of dairy subs[illegible] in keeping both the price and q[illegible] tity of milk artificially high.

Economists have long known [illegible]

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

rice ceilings cause shortages and hat price floors, such as the farm arity price supports, create surplus-s. Since the government guarantees minimum price for milk, dairy armers have an incentive to pro-uce as much milk as they can. So he problem is not that American ows produce more milk than every-ne can drink, as Hiss alleges; it's hat more milk is being produced han consumers are willing to pay or at the artificially high price set y the government.

Hiss misinterprets the safety issues nvolved with BGH as badly as he isunderstands the economics. To rove that BGH may be dangerous, e relies on one advocacy group's udy, which was discredited by the DA. Not only did the Rural Ver-ont study use a very small sample; also misidentified some of the ows. As the FDA associate commis-oner stated in a letter to Vermont enator Patrick Leahy, "Of the 56 ows listed by Rural Vermont as ST-treated cows, *at least nine* were *ntreated control* cows." Thus, it is mpossible to tell from which cows he illness came. Hundreds of studies sing much larger samples have con-luded that BGH milk is as safe as ilk from non-treated cows, and hat BGH does not adversely affect himal health.

It is ironic that Hiss's concluding aragraph takes issue with the claim hat "more is better" when he assumes hroughout his article that more farms re necessarily better. His argument hat "the number of active milk farms ould well double over the next ten ears if the price farmers get . . . were llowed to increase by as little as 15 ercent" is true for any business.

ohn Berlau
Consumer Alert
Arlington, Va.

Tony Hiss replies:

Mr. Tipton and Mr. Barr are op-osed to misinformation, but their etter neglects to point out that seri-us concerns about BGH and cow ealth have been raised repeatedly y reputable scientists, veterinarians, nd physicians in such highly re-pected scientific journals as *Nature*, *Science*, and *The Lancet*. In the first place, BGH is the commonly accepted term in science and medicine—both the FDA and Monsanto scientists have used it—but rbST (recombinant bovine somatotropin) is the term preferred by drug manufacturers because it doesn't automatically trigger negative associations people may have with the word "hormone."

Milk has indeed always contained traces of each cow's BGH hormones, but it hasn't until now had any methionyl-rbST traces (Monsanto's Posilac), which has a different amino acid sequence that may affect the immune system or elicit allergic responses. Other drug residues in milk may also be associated with rbST use; for example, Monsanto's package insert for Posilac anticipates that farmers using the drug may have to increase the amounts of medication their cows require. Furthermore, mastitis induced by Posilac appears to be resistant to the approved antibiotics usually administered. As for milk sales, United Dairy Industry Association figures show that fluid milk sales in February 1994, the month that Posilac went on sale, were 3.4 percent below February 1993 sales, a figure that an association memo characterized as a "huge decline."

As for Rural Vermont's analysis of the health of about 350 Holsteins treated with rbST at the University of Vermont: it's true that one letter from the FDA suggested that some of the cow numbers had been mixed up. But all six side effects of the drug identified for the first time by the Rural Vermont report were subsequently verified in the Posilac package insert. And a second FDA letter disclosed, again for the first time, that nine of twenty Jerseys given rbST in another UVM experiment came down with clinical mastitis, as opposed to only two cases in twenty control cows—a massive outbreak in a herd that had had good mastitis management prior to the BGH trials. The federal Office of Management and Budget disagrees with Mr. Berlau about farm subsidies and BGH; their January 1994 report suggests that widespread BGH use will increase dairy subsidies by many millions.

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NOTEBOOK

Thunder on the right

By Lewis H. Lapham

It is muddleheaded to say, I am in favor of this kind of political regime rather than that: what one really means is, I prefer this kind of police.

—E. M. Cioran

During the first weeks of the autumn election campaigns I noticed that when I turned on the radio and heard three or four people talking about politics, I couldn't tell the difference between the show's host, the congressman who had dropped by to drum up votes, the caller in Worcester disgusted with welfare cheats, and the caller in San Diego who wanted to bomb Baghdad. By late October I understood that the distinctions didn't matter. Everybody was as angry as everybody else, and all present belonged to one or another of the parties of virtue and conscience. As often as not the host turned out to be a friend of Pat Robertson's, the callers—Della in Worcester and Bob in San Diego—had both learned their politics from the paintings of Norman Rockwell, and the candidate, although he had served in Congress for twelve years, miraculously had avoided the sloughs of corruption that had engulfed so many of his fellow pilgrims on Capitol Hill.

Once having established their various states of innocence, the guests proceeded to the great task of calling down the wrath of Moses or Teddy Roosevelt on the heads of their innumerable enemies. The catalogue of their resentment provided the text for most of the season's five hundred election campaigns, and well before the end of September the angry voices on the radio had become indistinguishable from the television commercials in which the candidates for federal, state, and municipal office—like schoolboys delighting in the hate speech so long forbidden in the universities—scrawled dirty words on a succession of blackboards for which they paid, in the major media markets, as much as $70,000 a minute. Campaigning for the Senate in Tennessee, the Republican candidate (a heart surgeon named Bill Frist with little to recommend him other than the magnificence of his inherited fortune) demanded "term limits for career politicians and the death penalty for career criminals." Running for governor in Florida, Jeb Bush, the son of the former president, indirectly charged the Democratic incumbent with murder; and in New York State the Republican candidate for comptroller, Herbert London, portrayed his opponent as a black racist likely to favor sending Jews to death camps.

Every now and then I made note of a remark that embodied the spirit of the campaign, and among these I find two that strike me as memorable. First, from Cal Thomas, a syndicated newspaper columnist with whom I found myself in conversation on C-Span almost a year before the election. Summing up the already prevalent feeling of revulsion for the federal government and all its smiling lies, Thomas said, "We ought to just put a full-body condom over the entire city of Washington and flush it out to sea." Second, on the last weekend of the campaign, Congressman Newt Gingrich of Georgia (now Speaker of the House of Representatives) fitting the news of tragic murder in South Carolina to the specifications of self-serving political slogan. Taking note of the arrest of Susan Smith, the woman who drowned her two small children in a lake, Gingrich attributed her crime to the swarm of evils let loose upon the land by left-wing English professors and a prolonged Democratic majority in Congress. The poor woman's confusion, he said, "vividly reminds every American how sick the society is ge ting and how much we have to hav change . . . [and] the only way you g change is to vote Republican."

The bitter slanders reflected perception current among the pro ertied classes, predominantly whi and suburban, that they were bein robbed of their birthrights by a fec less government allied with th armies of the urban poor. Togeth with the citizens calling in the complaints to Don Imus or Rus Limbaugh—Della from her succes ful boutique and Bob from his pro itable boat marina—even politic candidates who had grown old public office presented themselv as victims of a world they neve made (one that had arisen myster ously out of the mists of the 196 behind the lyrics of a Bob Dyla song), and they gladly confirme everybody's fondest fears of cla warfare between the haves and th have-nots. Few politicians put th point so bluntly, but they kne which side to choose and, whethe Democrat or Republican, they too their uncompromising stands—bol as eagles, brave as lions—under th beach umbrellas of th big money.

On November 8 the sum of th electorate's well-nourished grievance found expression in the vote tha since has become the revelation the reactionary dream of paradise re gained. For the first time in forty yea the Republican Party gained con mand of the House of Representa tives; together with a majority in th Senate, the party's candidates won gu bernatorial elections in Californi Texas, Pennsylvania, and New Yor as well as control of eighteen state leg islatures previously held by the Dem ocrats. On the Democratic side of th ballot incumbent officeholders fe

ike rotted pears from wind-stricken rees, but among the Republicans not ne sitting governor, senator, or congressman lost an election.

Understood as a popular referendum against what since 1964 has been variously known as the Great Society, the New Covenant, and the L" word, the vote announced the oss of belief in the proposition that government, any government, can all into being the virtues of a civil ociety or the energies of high civilization. The vote matched the temper of a season in which the late Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's book *The Bell Curve*, a patchwork of dubious statistics and bogus theory, became a best-selling ensation on the strength of its good ews that destiny was genetic, cognition hereditary, and most black people justly sentenced at birth to lives f poverty and crime.

The post-election sifting of the ote confirmed the pre-election impression of panic among the possessing classes—for the first time since 970 more votes were cast by Republicans than by Democrats; in at least alf of the six hundred elections to ational, state, and local office, the whippers-in of the Christian right erded the faithful to the camp of the ictorious Republican candidate, and n California, Proposition 187 (the ne denying money and government ervices to illegal aliens) carried by a nargin of 3 to 2.

As was to be expected, the grand nasters of the Republican fraternal odges read the entrails of the election as proof of a happy return to the esthetics of Cecil B. De Mille and he politics of Calvin Coolidge. But lthough I could understand the rejoicing on the right as a euphoria not nlike the rapture of the deep, I expect that among the general public he feeling will prove short-lived, ike the excitements associated with he smashing of champagne glasses nd the tearing down of goalposts. Maybe it is unreasonable to ask or xpect anything else of an election in which only 39 percent of those eligible bothered to go to the polls and 75 ercent of the voters didn't know the ames of their own representatives in Congress. Closely trimmed to the winds of rumor drifting through the headphones of the radio talk show hosts, the campaign gathered its emotional force from a series of imbecile non sequiturs cheerfully ignored by Della and Bob as well as by the celebrity host and the distinguished senator. As follows:

1. Populism in Cream

Much of the present unhappiness in the society, as well as most of the damage done to the nation's economy over the last fifteen years, descends from the Reagan Administration's policy of increasing the wealth of the rich and reducing the means of the poor. Given the ceaseless muttering during the campaign about the lack of money and the loss of jobs, the electorate, had it been interested in cause and effect, might have been expected to direct its anger against the marble facades of the American oligarchy—against the Federal Reserve that has been steadily raising the interest rate (five times in the nine months prior to the election) or the corporations that have been busily winnowing the rows of middle management or shipping their back offices to Malaysia. But instead of blaming the rich, the voters blamed the poor, venting their spleen on immigrants, criminals, racial minorities, and beggars—i.e., on the constituencies that can't afford a trade association or a high-priced lobbyist. The tone of the political advertisements aped the snide humor of the David Letterman show, the insults and put-downs—fatso, zit, liberal, wetback, etc.—meant to display the moral refinement of the politician paying for the jokes. The candidates made sport of poor people buying shrimp with food stamps; they said nothing about Wall Street speculators buying office buildings with tax-free junk bonds.

Several of the nation's leading newspaper columnists were at pains to point out that the trouble with the political season—its mean-spiritedness and absence of debate—followed from the country's straitened economic circumstances. The God-fearing American people were said to be out of money and out of compassion, feeling themselves under attack by tax collectors stealing their money and dark-skinned immigrants stealing their jobs.

But little about the election campaigns suggested that they were anything other than expensive entertainments presented at the pleasure of the rich for the amusement of their admirers among the would-be rich, a series of diversions on the order of the amateur theatricals staged by the particular friends of Marie Antoinette at the Petite Trianon. The prominent candidates were for the most part individuals possessed of sizable fortunes (Mitt Romney, Ted Kennedy, Frank Lautenberg, Michael Huffington, Jeb and George Bush, Herb Kohl, Richard Fisher, and Bill Frist, etc.), and the audience to which they addressed their remarks was made up largely of the news media (i.e., the claque employed by the oligarchy to applaud its comings in and goings out) and those voters belonging to the wealthier echelons of the middle class. Far from being too poor to support its enthusiasm for politics, the country apparently was prosperous enough to spend upward of $500 million on the staging of an event that ESPN might rate as an attraction comparable to the East Asian golf tour or a wood-chopping tournament.

2. The Prom King

I can't remember a campaign in which so many people expressed such violent feelings of disgust for a sitting president. The objections were seldom political. Instead of condemning Clinton's legislative proposals or theories of government, the critics complained of the flaws in his character and deportment. They wished that he wouldn't give so many speeches or eat so many cheeseburgers. They didn't like his wife, or the sound of his voice, or the look of his hair. They thought him weak or too much obsessed by bureaucracy. Republican candidates everywhere in the country sought to identify their opponents as Friends of Bill, as if by merely establishing the association they proved the Democrat guilty of a dingy passion for government acronyms or Gennifer Flowers.

The perceptions were contradicted by the facts. Clinton shaped his poli-

ties to the conservative temperament of the times, and no Democratic president in recent memory had so eagerly attempted to expose himself as a closet Republican. During the 1992 campaign Clinton avoided being too often seen in the company of feminists and black people, and as President he had lobbied into law the three Republican initiatives dear to the heart of President Bush—deficit reduction, the crime bill, and the North American Free Trade Agreement. His economic policies were as sound as the furniture in the boardroom of Goldman Sachs, but he made the mistake of thinking that the country was still interested in Democratic social policy, and by attempting to reform the health-care system he smeared his image as a good Republican and became the personification of big government, the inveterate busybody rummaging through desks and insurance claims, levying taxes and stamping death certificates.

Once having blundered into the morass of large-scale social reform, the President never could regain his footing as the Prom King elected to preside over what in 1992 both the voters and Clinton's corporate sponsors thought would prove to be a Republican government dressed up in the costumes of a television miniseries loosely based on the life of Andrew Jackson. The Democratic Party had been morally and intellectually bankrupt for twenty years, the remnants of its principles sold at auction at increasingly low prices during the Reagan and Bush administrations, and nobody expected Clinton to take seriously the slogans found on old Hubert Humphrey buttons. Most of the time he didn't, but once or twice he forgot who was paying for the orchestra, and despite his innate conservatism and fondness for golf, the political audience chose to see him as a lost flower child at a Grateful Dead concert.

3. Uncle Sugar

So many of the opinion polls showed the electorate so implacably opposed to the existence as well as the theory of big government that one would have thought at least a few voters willing to give up their own particular subsidy—the tax deduction for home loan mortgages, say, or Social Security payments, or student loans, or Medicare. Della and Bob remained silent on the subject, and so did the candidates touring states and towns dependent upon the military budget or posing for photo opportunities in picturesque wheat fields enriched with the fertilizer of federal money. The damnable entitlement always proved to be somebody else's entitlement—somebody certainly undeserving and probably ethnic.

About the uses of government the contradictions were so many and so blatant that even Representative Gingrich often got lost in the labyrinth of his own sophism. He objected to the reckless squandering of public money on the shiftless and ungrateful poor, but he favored extravagant transfer payments to the appreciative and industrious rich, and over the span of his fifteen years in Congress his own districts in Georgia received gifts of federal largesse almost as lavish as those sent to Arlington County, Virginia, and Brevard County, Florida.

Nor was Gingrich willing to relinquish the government's power to build the new Arcadia or justify God's ways to man. The Democrats upon whom Gingrich dripped the acid of his contempt ("welfare liberals," "McGoverniks," "Stalinists," "enem[ies] of normal Americans") had made the mistake of trying to reconstruct the social and economic order. Presuming to change black people into white people and Spanish Harlem into Palm Springs, they had sought to rectify the mistakes of a careless Providence that somehow had neglected to provide equal shares of intelligence, beauty, and Microsoft Preferred to every child born under the American sun.

In the world according to Newt, the proposition failed not only because it was foolish but also because it substituted the lesser for the greater task. What was really important was the reconstruction of the moral order, nothing less than the "rescue of American civilization" from the pits of cynicism and despair into which it had been cast by hardened feminists and marijuana-smoking guitar players. The government, said Gingrich, must bring forth the spiritual analogue of the New Deal, must repeal the decade of the 1960s, clarify the distinctions between right and wrong, take Sunday school attendance, recall the American people (if necessary by force) to the shelter of "traditional morals," and bend the coercive powers of government to the reformation of the American character instead of the reconstruction of the American economy.

4. Past Perfect

No day passed without one or another of the candidates saying that "it's time for a change." The phrase appeared in eight of every ten television commercials, the implication being that whoever bought the time was advancing boldly into a future certain to be filled with prizes like the ones handed out by Vanna White on *Wheel of Fortune*. But the phrase was as empty as every other phrase in the campaign. What was wanted was the appearance of change and not its substance: a parade of new faces, even if they were as vacant as glass (c.f., George Pataki, the governor of New York), and a rush of new words, even if they were nonsense rhymes.

Had either the voters or the candidates seriously considered the prospect of substantive change, the conversation presumably would have addressed specific legislative measures—about education, foreign policy, the deficit, health care, the GATT treaty, campaign finance, and the environment. But instead of modest and therefore plausible reforms, there was Gingrich's grandiose "Contract with America," and instead of debate there was gossip—about Oliver North's felonies or Chuck Robb's mistress, about "McGoverniks" wandering in and out of pornographic movies, about the moral decay in downtown Toledo and drug dealers scouting the perimeter of Greenwich, Connecticut.

By way of allaying every voter's worry that he or she may have to give something up, the candidates new to politics put forward their ig-

ɔrance of Washington as proof that
ey were the last people on earth
xely to know how to operate the
achinery of government and thus,
definition, incapable of changing
ven so much as a light bulb in the
ouse of Representatives. It was as if
heart surgeon were to say that al-
ough he knew nothing of scalpels
anesthetics, and objected to the
bitrary discrimination between an
tery and a vein, he was the man to
erform the operation because he
ıd adhered all his life to "Hoosier
ɔmetown values" and once had
ved an Airedale from being run
er by a train. Elect me, dear voter,
cause I am an ignorant fool. Even
tter, dear voter, elect me because,
ke you, I despise the office in pur-
it of which I already have spent
4 million in promotional fees.

Campaigning for the Senate in
alifornia, Michael Huffington set
e standard of absurdity to which so
any of the season's campaigns so
pensively aspired. With respect to
s presence in Washington as a one-
rm congressman during the Reagan
dministration, Huffington said that
l anybody did there was pass around
ıintelligible pieces of paper, a cha-
ıde in which he for one certainly
eant to take no part. "I'm against
'ashington," he said, "always have
en. Congress has been in session
for two hundred years, and
all they do is make laws."

Taken as a measure of the popu-
r and deep-seated preference for
e joys of anti-politics, the belliger-
ıt non sequiturs of the fall elections
l but guarantee another two years
legislative futility in Congress,
ıich probably is the result that the
ɔters had in mind. Gingrich con-
med the prognosis when he came
Washington three days after the
ection and said that as the probable
ɔeaker of the House he was in no
ood to bargain with anybody who
dn't agree with his notions of
merica's moral reawakening.
ɔeaking to a crowd of businessmen
the Willard Hotel, Gingrich of-
red his intransigence ("coopera-
ɔn, yes; compromise, no") as a tes-
ment to his righteousness, and to a
porter from the *New York Times* he
said, "The White House can either decide to accommodate reality, or they can decide to repudiate reality. That's their choice."

Absent the prospect of useful compromise, and assuming that the new Republican majorities won't take much interest in President Clinton's "national conversation" or Hillary Clinton's "politics of meaning," what then will the members of the 104th Congress find to say to one another? Let the majority divide into the factions of the authoritarian and libertarian right, and with any luck it will fall to arguing about how best to close the Mexican border, or whether to send troublesome adolescents to boot camps or Indian reservations, or when to schedule public floggings and where to build the next prison, or which grade of boiling oil to pour on the heads of undocumented maids. Given the presumption that government can contribute nothing of importance to the building of a secular commonwealth, what else can it do except distribute punishments and devise spectacles likely to excite the interest of a bored audience at the next election? It won't be easy to upstage the sensations of 1994. Possibly the congressmen will content themselves with the frequent openings of orphanages (loud applause when Gingrich cuts the ribbon), or with the ceremonial demolitions of federal office buildings (more applause and a release of balloons), or with costume balls staged in the courtyards of state prisons (dance music, the laughter of pretty women, Oliver North and Pat Buchanan both dressed as Napoleon). But the market for mass entertainment favors the trend toward violence, and in response to the clamor of the opinion polls I can imagine a party of committee chairmen outfitted by Banana Republic or Polo Sport, gunning for an endangered species of jackrabbit or Guatemalan on the Texas plains. ■



Photo by Kathy Morris

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HARPER'S INDEX

Chances that a new legislator entering Congress this month has never held an elective office : 2 in 5
Percentage of congressional races in the 10 states with the weakest economic recovery that resulted in a Republican gain : 5
Percentage of congressional races in the 10 states with the strongest economic recovery that resulted in a Republican gain : 19
Number of all congressional races last fall contested by only one major-party candidate : 53
Ratio of the number of Americans holding two or more jobs to the number who are unemployed : 1:1
Chances that a legal immigrant to the United States from the former Soviet Union receives welfare : 1 in 6
Chances that a legal Mexican immigrant does : 1 in 9
Percentage change between 1992 and 1993 in the infant-mortality rate in New York City's Harlem : +60
Number of countries whose infant-mortality rate is lower than that of Harlem : 79
Mandatory minimum jail sentence, in years, for possession of five grams of crack : 5
Chances that an American sentenced for crack-related offenses is white : 1 in 25
Mandatory minimum sentence for possession of five grams of cocaine : 0
Chances that an American sentenced for cocaine possession is white : 1 in 3
Number of states that are under court order to alleviate overcrowding and poor conditions at one or all of their prisons : 39
Sets of fingerprints in the FBI's files that belong to people who have never been convicted of a crime : 86,442,642
Number of the four indicted congressmen running for re-election last fall who won : 3
Average number of Washington, D.C., police officers arrested each year since 1989 : 40
Ratio of the number of U.S. police officers who commit suicide each year to the number killed in the line of duty : 2:1
Number of domestic-violence counselors the NFL sent to its teams' training camps last year : 28
Annual number of high school students, per 1,000, involved in weapons offenses at U.S. public schools : 3.8
Number of middle and junior high school students, per 1,000, involved in weapons offenses : 7.3
Number of times social scientist Charles Murray has publicly disclosed his IQ : 0
Number of insect species that entomologists have named after cartoonist Gary Larson : 3
Number of boys who have auditioned to play Howard Stern as a child in his autobiographical film, *Private Parts* : 320
Average percentage change in a woman's immunosystem cell count during orgasm : +20
First prize awarded the creator of Savory Spam Cheesecake at the L.A. County Fair's Spam Recipe Contest last year : $100
Price of a full halitosis-prevention exam and follow-up at the California Breath Center in Los Angeles : $450
Maximum amount of sulfur in one human exhalation before it is considered "bad breath," in parts per billion : 130
Number of gas stations in France offering Fruity Vanilla Super, a scented gasoline : 3,500 (see page 28)
Price of an "authentic Russian street sweeper jacket," from the Peter the Great Coat Company, in Minneapolis : $79
Number of rubber ducks accidentally spilled in the North Pacific in 1992 by a U.S.-bound freighter : 7,250
Number of oceanographers conducting a study of the ducks' dispersion as a measure of ocean currents : 2
Ratio of the salary of the director of the National Wildlife Federation to that of the director of Greenpeace USA : 4:1
Estimated number of organizations that predict the millennium will bring "some form of Armageddon" : 350
Rank of Kao Island, in the South Pacific, among the first places worldwide to be lit by the light of the new century : 1
Amount the village of Oligut, Papua New Guinea, raised last year to send an O. J. Simpson look-alike to Los Angeles : $1,705
Percentage of Americans who said last October that they had "never heard of" Newt Gingrich : 42
Distance between the Speaker of the House and the U.S. presidency, in heartbeats : 2
Record low temperature last January in Hell, Michigan : –25° F

Figures cited are the latest available as of November 1994. Sources are listed on page 71.
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READINGS

[Essay]

DEMONIZING THE ACADEMY

Adapted from "A Leg-up for Oliver North," by Richard Rorty, in the October 20, 1994, London Review of Books. *Rorty is a professor of humanities at the University of Virginia. His essay "For a More Banal Politics" appeared in the May 1992 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Among the many convenient targets that Republican politicians and intellectuals have at their disposal, the one at which they direct their fire with perhaps the most delight is the academy. George Will, William Bennett, and other right-wing thinkers never tire of recounting the follies of professors, and of portraying them as naive, duped, and possibly duplicitous. The right has made especially clever and effective use of the widespread suspicion of multiculturalism. A large portion of the American middle class has been made to believe that the universities are under the control of a "political correctness" police. This false belief has made it easier for the racists, the sexists, and the homophobes to dismiss their opponents as far-out, self-intoxicated radicals—out of touch with the sound common sense of mainstream America.

There is reason to view multiculturalism with alarm—but only mild alarm. The real danger comes from those who are trying to create a monster from what is, at worst, a nuisance. Multiculturalism began to go sour soon after it was invented. It started out as one more attempt to get white middle-class males to behave better toward the people they enjoy shoving around—black and brown people, women, poor people, recent immigrants, homosexuals. It hoped to encourage these groups to take pride in themselves rather than accept the derogatory descriptions that the white males had invented for them. By now, however, it has turned into an attempt to get jobs and grants for psychobabbling busybodies.

The movement began in colleges and universities as an attempt to make room for courses and programs in African-American Studies, Hispanic Studies, Women's Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, and the like. This attempt succeeded, and the results have been fruitful. On the campuses, particularly those where such programs exist, there is less humiliation of blacks and browns, less condescension to women, and more safety for homosexuals than anywhere else in society. And these programs are often staffed by some of the liveliest, most interesting, and most devoted teachers.

A debilitating mistake was made, however, when academics began to campaign for compulsory undergraduate courses that would "sensitize students to cultural differences." There is a big difference between offering a tempting smorgasbord of courses designed to help students grasp what the strong have been doing to the weak, and telling them that they *must* take such courses. It is the difference between gently suggesting, as universities always have, that attitudes acquired at home may need supplementation or correction, and telling undergraduates that they are sick and need treatment. It is one thing to treat students as fellow citizens who might be persuaded to think and act differently than their parents. It is quite another to insinuate that they have been psychologically damaged. Where proposals to

make sensitivity training compulsory have gone through, they have boomeranged. The students have quickly come to despise the "compulsory chapel requirement" and to distrust the courses that fulfill it.

In contrast to such facile exercises in "sensitivity," genuine discussion about the divisions in American society would concentrate on disparities of power rather than differences in culture. It would involve stories about how the WASPs have shoved the non-WASPs around, how the men have shoved the women around, how the whites enslaved the blacks, and how the straights beat up the gays. It would emphasize, for example, the fact that property-tax-based public-school financing ensures that the life chances of children in black cities will continue to be vastly inferior to those of children in white suburbs.

Multiculturalism, however, is obsessed not with the suffering but with the "identity" of the groups that have been shoved around. Starting from the admirable idea that black children should learn about Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and W.E.B. Du Bois, it ends up with the dubious recommendation that a black child should be brought up in a special culture, one peculiar to blacks. Starting from the thought that white children too should know about heroic African-Americans, it ends up with the self-fulfilling prediction that they will remain separated from their black contemporaries not just by money and life chances but by a "difference of culture."

But it is not to the advantage either of our country or of those whom it still treats as second-class citizens to urge, as the multiculturalists do, that we think of the United States as "a salad rather than a melting pot." The simple, straightforward, vicious, terrifying racism that still forces most blacks and browns to struggle desperately, and often hopelessly, for jobs, status, and security is not a result of failure to "recognize cultural diversity." As in the rest of the world, it is a way of ensuring that the descendants of those presently in power will always, automatically, have an advantage because of their easily recognizable, desirable color. Racism, here as elsewhere, increases as soon as jobs and opportunities decrease, and lessens as they increase. If racism ever ends in the United States, it will be as a result of enduring affluence.

In the meantime, it can be mitigated only by appealing, as Martin Luther King did, to whites' sense of justice toward their fellow Americans. Teaching both black and white children what African-American men and women have done for their country makes such an appeal. Teaching them that the two groups have separate cultural identities does no good at all. Whatever pride such teaching may inspire in black children is offset by the suggestion that their culture is not that of their white schoolmates, that they have no share in the mythic America imagined by the Founders

[Translator's Guide]

VIETNAM'S ESSENTIAL PHRASES

From A Handbook for the English Language Translator, *a phrase book distributed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for use by official government translators. In the book, common Vietnamese expressions are accompanied by their English equivalents, some examples of which appear below.*

Class in itself and class for itself
Maintain constant vigilance
They tarnish the image of Vietnam
They consistently followed the anticommunist hard line
Denigrated party members
He expressed his full support for the unswerving stand of . . .
Warmly hail the goodwilled and constructive proposals of . . .
Foster revolutionary ardor
The stooge (puppet) government
Imperialism plans to launch a global counteroffensive
Deal heavy blows to neocolonialism
They create new hotbeds of tension
Universal love
Mold new generations of people motivated by a sense of collective mastery, the love of labor, and respect for public property, possessing a certain cultural level of scientific and technical knowledge and good health, and animated by the love for the socialist homeland and proletarian internationalism
Scorched-earth policy
A wave of machine-gun fire swept down the hillside
We pour intense fire into the field
The dry-season offensive has been foiled
A small group was left to fight a delaying action in the paddies
Regimental combat teams were hacked to pieces



"T.P., Shoemaker, and Dog, Super Bowl Sunday," by Birney Imes. From Whispering Pines, *a collection of Imes's photographs taken at a roadside tavern in Crawford, Mississippi, published by the University Press of Mississippi. Imes lives in Columbus, Mississippi.*

and by Emerson and Whitman, the America partially realized by Lincoln and by King.

That mythic America is a great country, and the insecure and divided actual America is a pretty good one. As racist, sexist, and homophobic as the United States is, it is also a two-hundred-year-old functioning democracy—one that has overcome divisions and mitigated inequalities in the past and may still have the capacity to do so. But by proclaiming the myth a fraud, multiculturalism cuts the ground out from under its own feet, quickly devolving into anti-Americanism, into the idea that "the dominant culture" of America, that of the WASPs, is so inherently oppressive that it would be better for its victims to turn their backs on the country than to claim a share in its history and future.

Although multiculturalism, as a political movement, is guilty of certain blunders and excesses, its critics have greatly exaggerated the threat it poses and the influence it wields. In his recent book *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future*, Richard Bernstein, one of the best reporters at the *New York Times*, writes that "ideological multiculturalism" has brought about "a great inversion in American intellectual life," so that

> whereas before the oppressive force came from the political right, and had to do with a particular view of patriotism, standards and traditional values, the threat of intellectual tyranny now comes from the left, and it now has to do with collective guilt, an overweening moralism and multiculturalism. The danger to such things as free speech and genuine diversity of opinion is no longer due to conservatism; it is due to the triumph of a modish, leftist, moralistic, liberalism.

Nothing in reality (or in Bernstein's book) justifies that last, utterly misleading sentence. Although the book does show that there are more shallow-pated, resentful multiculturalists around than one might have thought, and that they have managed to get control of a primary school system here and a university English department there, the well-organized, well-financed, and very energetic religious right is a hundred times more threatening to free speech

and diversity of opinion than all the multiculturalists put together.

Allies of the religious right and conservative intellectuals would like to persuade the public that Allan Bloom was right in suggesting that the universities are under the control of a "Nietzscheanized left," and that the life of the mind in America survives only in conservative think tanks. There is, to be sure, such a left; though it has managed to achieve a lot of good, it is remarkably shortsighted and sometimes pretty silly. Still, its members total perhaps 10 percent of university teachers of the humanities and social sciences and perhaps 2 percent of all university teachers.

The right has been astonishingly successful in impugning the integrity of the entire system of higher education by pointing to the frivolity and self-righteousness of this 2 percent. The conservatives have some good points, but their exaggerations and lies are shameless. It is quite true that if you are a recent Ph.D. in the humanities or social sciences, your chances of finding a teaching job are very good if you are a black female and pretty bad if you are a white male. But such preferential hiring has, on balance, been a good thing for our universities. Those black females—few of whom were seen on university campuses during the first two hundred years of U.S. history—include some of our leading intellectuals. It is quite true that an undergraduate occasionally finds herself in a course devoted to leftist political indoctrination, but she can always drop that course—and many do. (There are also, needless to say, courses that consist largely of rightist political indoctrination.) It is also true that the 2 percent continue to write in a barely intelligible jargon. But compared with the ravings of the fundamentalist preachers about God's hatred for gays and lesbians, such prattle is merely quaint.

There is, indeed, a battle for America's future going on—but it is not the one Bernstein describes in his book. It is a battle between those who see the widening gap between rich and poor as a disaster for the country, and those who see it as just what the poor deserve. It is a struggle for the mind of an electorate that is largely coextensive with the suburban white middle class—a middle class terrified by the downsizing of American firms caused by the globalization of the labor market, and by the thought that its children may wind up on the wrong side of the gap. Politicians like the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, and wowsers like Pat Robertson have capitalized, with the utmost cynicism and with complete disregard for the nation's future, on this terror. One of their strategies is to portray the professoriate as a conspiracy of leftist fools and knaves.

It is greatly to the advantage of Gingrich and Robertson to convince the public that the colleges and universities—the places where blacks and gays, women and recent immigrants are treated best—are eccentric, dissolute, corrupt, and perverse. This enables them to dismiss out of hand the warnings of liberal professors—warnings about creating an underclass without hope and of letting the national agen-

[Brochure]

AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE ORIENTAL RUGS

From a brochure given to guests at the Spring, Texas, home of Reina and Gene Fontenot. Gene Fontenot, a Republican, ran unsuccessfully last fall for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Welcome to our blessed home. From the very moment you open the door and behold the beauty of every treasure we have collected from different parts of the world, we pray that it will bless you and minister God's presence of love to you.

I would like to share with you how this unique and magnificent house came about. It began one day when my husband said, "You know, Reina, one day we are going to build a big, beautiful house." To tell you the truth, I was quite satisfied with the one we owned, but as I prayed and began to accept my husband's dream, I found it very pleasing.

As we took several pleasure trips around the world, the Lord God would put it in our hearts to buy certain pieces of furniture for our future house. Our favorite place was Italy, where we were overwhelmed by the beauty of the handcrafted furniture and the architecture. In China we acquired very good buys. My husband said, "Okay, we are here in Hong Kong, so buy all the Oriental rugs that you'll need for our dream house." I prayed to God for direction and bought the most beautiful floral rugs I'd ever seen.

Living happily ever after in our dream house, we thank God, for He gave it to us, and we, in gratitude, give it back to Him.

Joyfully Serving Jesus,
Reina and Gene Fontenot

da be dominated by the fears of the suburbs. Such warnings can be brushed aside by treating the academy as having succumbed to a "modish, leftist, moralistic liberalism." We can expect, in the next few years, to see more and more attempts to discredit the colleges and universities, for the right is well aware that the American academy is now (after the breakdown of the labor movement) the last remaining defender of the poor against the rich and of the weak against the strong.

[Media Criticism]

GORILLA WARFARE

From "Guerrillas in the Mist," a comparison of recent political events in Rwanda and the corresponding American media coverage, by Ken Silverstein, in the September issue of The Washington Monthly. *In the article, Silverstein argues that American journalists largely ignore political events in Africa, "barring brutal warfare, a natural disaster, or widespread famine." In the case of Rwanda, Silverstein writes, the media failed to cover the events that led to the country's civil war; instead, coverage "focused almost entirely on a cuddlier subject: Dian Fossey's apes." Fossey was killed in Rwanda in 1985 while studying mountain gorillas.*

1991

EVENTS: Fighting, which had begun the previous fall, increased between the repressive Hutu-dominated government of Juvenal Habyarimana and the guerrillas of the largely Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

The war led to increased human-rights violations. According to Amnesty International's 1991 report, "Dozens of members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, including possible prisoners of conscience, were detained. There were reports of torture and 'disappearances.' Hundreds of extrajudicial executions by members of the security forces and vigilante groups were reported."

George Bush increased U.S. aid to Rwanda from $9 million to $15 million.

PRESS COVERAGE: Despite the outbreak of warfare, journalists early in the year reported hopeful signs about Rwanda's future. The cause for optimism: scientists were reporting an increase in the population of mountain gorillas to 306, up from 242 in 1981.

A brief January 20 dispatch in the *Orlando Sentinel* said that conservationists were "heartened by the most recent census of mountain gorillas, the animals slain scientist Dian Fossey tried to protect." The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

[Bible Passage]

GET DOWN, MOSES

From Black Bible Chronicles, *a new version of the Bible published by African American Family Press, in New York City. In a foreword to the book, Andrew Young, the former mayor of Atlanta, writes that in order to be "truly relevant" to young people, the Bible "must be in a language familiar to their culture." The selection below is from the book of Exodus.*

When the children of Israel came to the Sinai Desert, Moses took himself up the mountain to have a chat with the Almighty. And the Almighty told him, "Tell 'em that if they make a deal with me that they'll keep, it'll be on the one with me always. Now, you go and tell 'em."

Moses climbed down from the mountain and told the elders of the people what the Almighty had said and everyone said. "Yeah, that's cool. We can deal with that."

And many days later, the Almighty came down with thundering and lightning. It was a sight to behold. He gave them commands that would help make the deal complete.

"I am the Almighty, your God, who brought you outta Egypt when things were tough. Don't put anyone else before Me.

"Don't make any carved objects or things that look like what is in heaven or below. And don't bow down to these things like they are anything heavy. Not ever!

"You shouldn't dis the Almighty's name, using it in cuss words or rapping with one another. It ain't cool, and payback's a monster.

"After you've worked six days, give the seventh to the Almighty." (The Almighty made the heavens and earth in six days. He rested on the seventh day and blessed it as right on.)

"You shouldn't be takin' nothin' from your homeboys.

"Give honor to your mom and dad, and you'll live a long time.

"Don't waste nobody.

"Don't mess around with someone else's ol' man or ol' lady.

"Don't go 'round telling lies on your homebuddies.

"Don't want what you can't have or what your homebuddy has. It ain't cool."

The folks were scared out of their wits. They figured it was better that the Almighty talked straight to Moses instead of them 'cuz it was just too heavy for words.

reported on the encouraging trend on April 17, after a renowned ape researcher mentioned it during a lecture at a local university. Possibly because editors felt the country's story was hopelessly complicated, neither of these articles mentioned that there was a war taking place in Rwanda.

1992

EVENTS: Casualties mounted; human-rights groups reported that roughly 2,000 civilians had been killed in the fighting and hundreds of others had been raped or tortured. In one particularly bloody incident, 150 Tutsi were killed and many others injured during a March attack by pro-government groups of armed Hutu. Western weaponry poured in, including $2.3 million in arms bought from the United States. Mass demonstrations early in the year led Habyarimana to appoint opposition leader Dismas Nsengiyaremye as prime minister. The latter's national-unity government was shaken in November when Justice Minister Stanislas Mbonampeka resigned his post, citing a lack of cooperation from security forces.

PRESS COVERAGE: Anguish reached fever pitch in midyear, when a male silverback gorilla known as Mrithi, Sigourney Weaver's costar in the movie *Gorillas in the Mist*, became the first ape casualty of the war (apparently the accidental victim of an edgy military patrol).

In a lengthy report on May 28, the *Chicago Tribune* lauded the victim as "a magnificent, gentle animal with many human characteristics." The *Christian Science Monitor* ran an eight-hundred-word obituary on Mrithi, lamenting that the "needless snuffing of [the ape's] short, noble life leaves a void we will not soon see filled."

1993

EVENTS: It was another bad year for human rights. The U.N. special rapporteur visited in April and found that government forces had murdered some 2,300 civilians since the conflict with the RPF erupted in 1990. For its part, the rebel army was reportedly responsible for the arbitrary killing of up to 300 civilians during 1993.

PRESS COVERAGE: More stories on life in the gorilla zone. The *New York Times* ran a May 17 op-ed piece—its only such offering on Rwanda between 1991 and 1993—warning that Dian Fossey's former gorilla camp, smack in the center of a combat zone, was badly imperiled. With a passion unmatched in any journalistic account about the human suffering of Rwanda's war, Rutgers anthropology professor H. Dieter Steklis bitterly charged that protecting the apes was "not high on the world's agenda of problems to solve." He urged U.N. action to protect the apes, proclaiming, "There is not one gorilla to spare."

The grave threat to Fossey's camp was also the subject of stories in *Newsweek* and the *Houston Chronicle*. The lengthy, angry piece in the latter, by Joseph Verrengia, said that recent damage to the compound had left scientists "sputtering with rage" and "moved to tears." Verrengia mentioned the war's human toll only in writing that "the hunger and desperation of a million war refugees" had made Rwanda a less "enticing place for visiting scientists to work."

A May 20 Reuters story echoed this sense of priorities. The report led with the news that thirty-six apes had been reported AWOL from the Virunga mountain region following an RPF offensive. The gorillas were also "threatened by land mines planted in the . . . civil war," said the article, which casually noted near the end that "the conflict has made more than 350,000 people homeless and ruined the lives of close to one million."

[Insults]

DISSING WHITEY

From a list of "Slurs Against Americans of European Origin," in Sensitivity Toward European Americans, *a handbook published by Resisting Defamation, a San Jose, California, group devoted to informing people "about the complex, richly textured, and ancient ethnic and cultural diversity of European Americans."*

Anglo
Bubba
Canuck
Cracker
Dominant Culture
Egg
Eurotrash
Fig Newton
Frenchie
Gringo
Heinz 57
Hick
Honky
Hun
Ice People
Jarhead
Jerry
Limey
Mick
Okie
Paddy
Paleface
Peckerwood
Redneck
Round Eyes
Swamp Yankee
Vanilla
Visigoth
WASP
White Devil
White Trash
Whitey
Wigger
Wonder Bread
Wop
Yankee Dog



"Brad, Michelle, Mike, 2nd Grade," by CAR, a Milwaukee artists' collective, exhibited last October as part of "The Uncomfortable Show, Part 1" at the Ten in One Gallery in Chicago. Mike (at right) is Michelle's ex-husband; Brad and Michelle are now married and live in Milwaukee with Mike and Michelle's son, Peter, seven, and their own son, Oliver, two. The piece above is part of a work in progress that explores "the complex layers of child rearing, estate settlement, [and] visitation scheduling." Brad, Michelle, and Mike were strangers when the photographs were taken.

[Tactics]

PRO-LIFE TERRORISM: A HOW-TO

From "Ninety-Nine Covert Ways to Stop Abortion," a chapter in The Army of God, *a manual for anti-abortion activists found last October in a hole in Shelley Shannon's backyard in Grants Pass, Oregon. Shannon is serving a ten-year prison term for the attempted murder of Dr. George R. Tiller, a doctor at an abortion clinic in Wichita, Kansas; since the discovery of the manual and other incriminating letters and diaries, she has been charged with setting fire to eight clinics in California, Nevada, Oregon, and Idaho. The manual, which is in its third edition, was obtained by Voters for Choice, a political action committee in Washington, D.C.*

The pro-life activist can use superglue to save babies' lives. By simply walking by the doors of the abortuary early in the morning and squirting superglue into the locks, you have effectively stopped the opening of the killing center. The locks will have to be drilled out and replaced. The gluer has therefore bought precious time for pro-life counselors to speak to mothers seeking abortions.

•

Do you know how pesky roof leaks are? Pro-life activists have been known to accelerate the natural process of roof decay by drilling holes into the low points of flat roofs. You will need either a portable electric drill or a hand drill. The latter is quieter and less expensive, which means you take a smaller loss if it has to be abandoned at the site.

•

Pro-life activists have been known to send "mail" to abortionists through the mail slots in their front doors. They use the abortionist's garden hose or bring one of their own, place it through the mail slot, and turn it on.

•

Brothers and sisters in solidarity with babies in the struggle for life have had episodes of diarrhea right in front of an abortion mill's doors. A rented dump truck filled with cow manure can fit the bill. A garden hose placed on top of the pile and left running gives it the preferred consistency.

•

These days, the typical death camp is a veritable fortress, complete with lots of bricks, bars, reinforced glass, surveillance cameras, etc. By far the most important security device is the Halon Fire Protection System. The Halon System is designed to remove oxygen from the building in the event of a fire so that the fire won't spread; if the building has the Halon System, simply igniting flammable material inside the building won't do the trick. The perfect solution is a propane tank with either a time-delay device or a simple rope fuse; the propane will cause an initial explosion that will bring in outside air and foil the Halon System. Those of you not using time-delay devices, remember that not all fuses are created equal, so pretest whichever variety you

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THE MOST DANGEROUS DRUG IN AMERICA IS SILENCE.

Washington's drug policy has been one of the most expensive failures in American history.

But not talking about it is costing us much more than money. Elected officials aren't allowed to say that the emperor has no clothes. It's politically incorrect to suggest that the strategy that has cost us over 100 billion tax dollars just isn't going to work.

The streets aren't safer. The flow of drugs hasn't been stopped. The spread of deadly diseases like AIDS from unsafe needle use has reached epidemic proportions. The truth is painfully obvious, ignoring it won't make it go away.

Thanks to our present drug strategy, the United States has now surpassed some of the most repressive regimes in the world to become the leading jailer outside of the Republic of Russia.

Who benefits? Organized crime barons who fill their pockets from the illegal drug trade, which is estimated at over $40 billion a year.

Who loses? Anybody who gets caught in the middle, including police officers and innocent children. Disputes aren't settled in courts of law, but with automatic weapons in the streets.

BUT IT'S POLITICAL SUICIDE TO DEBATE IT.

When Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders said that the existing drug policy was "worth studying," she was censored. When Attorney General Janet Reno directed a review of mandatory minimum sentences for minor drug offenders, she was ignored. The silence is deafening. It should be alarming. America isn't becoming drug free...just less free.

WE THINK IT'S MORAL AND SOCIAL SUICIDE TO BE SILENT.

So, whose silence is it? It's yours, it's mine, it's the guy's next door. We can no longer sit quietly by while our nation continues to invest in a policy that clearly won't work. There's got to be a better way.

We all share a deep concern over the problems caused by drug abuse in our society. But the cure has become worse than the disease. There are effective policies that can be implemented today - policies that will make our nation healthier and more humane.

Our objective is to make sure a crucial debate is explored in local, national media and on Capitol Hill. Many of this country's top judges, mayors, law officers and educators are already contributing time and money to help make sure this debate does. But we need your support, your voice, your membership.

Right now, we have an opportunity to make memberships work twice as hard. A major funder is willing to match them dollar for dollar. Your membership contribution of $50 or more will bring you information on how our campaign for a sane drug policy is progressing and how you can participate. It will also bring you a year's subscription to our newsletter, a free copy of Friedman & Szasz's thought-provoking book *On Liberty and Drugs,* and up-to-date information on how you can be even more involved.

If it were possible for America to spend its way out of this problem, we would have by now. But, we've always been able to reason together to find better solutions. Isn't it time we broke the long, dangerous silence and found one for this?

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use. Defenders of life with easy access to quality fusing should spread the wealth around, since it is not contraband.

•

In order to frame people's understanding of the destruction of a killing center, a final picket of the death camp is in order. Signs should say that the real violence has finally stopped. The rubble of the death camp can be used to help our minds and hearts remember the value of flesh and blood. Put small amounts of rubble in baby-food jars and attach labels to the jars with pertinent statistics such as the date, location, number of children killed before the destruction, etc. The rubble would make excellent gifts for those who donate to your direct-action group!

•

The scenario: You find out that you have a very short time to live due to a terminal illness. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You may have been involved in many types of resistance but stopped short of performing certain activities out of fear of consequences; e.g., extended incarceration. Now the main fear of performing these activities has been miraculously removed. Whichever activities are undertaken (torching, bombing, thumb removal [cutting off doctors' thumbs], etc.), carry on with reckless abandon! If you are apprehended, it will be over soon anyway. If not, then you will die at home with your loved ones after all. Say you are given three months to live. You commit to torching two killing chambers every other day in different cities for eleven weeks. That's seventy-seven destroyed death camps!

For those who think this tactic highly rare, you're correct. However, it would only take a few activists practicing terminal courage to drive the entire killing industry underground. Maybe the Spirit of God has been hounding you to take certain actions on behalf of His children but you have not obeyed. Here's your last chance.



"We'd like to end our recital this evening with a final death knell for Western civilization."

From The Spectator.

[Myths]

ENGLAND'S EUROANXIETY

From "Do You Believe All You Read in the Newspapers?" a booklet distributed by the London office of the European Commission. The booklet contains the E.C.'s response to thirty-nine "Euro-Myths," stories that have appeared in British newspapers about the consequences of the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union. According to an introductory note, these stories "appear to threaten often bizarre forms of interference by Brussels in the British way of life. The uncritical newspaper reader . . . would conclude that the European Commission had taken leave of its senses."

Myth: Under European Commission law all fishing boats have to carry a stock of no fewer than two hundred condoms in order to ensure that fishermen have safe sex.

Fact: The only piece of E.C. legislation that even approximates this allegation is a directive making it compulsory for ships to carry a certain number of medicines to cover the crew's medical-aid requirements. This directive does not include condoms.

Myth: E.C. officials are planning to ban saucy seaside postcards under the guise that they are "sexist and offensive to women."

Fact: Absolutely not. The E.C. is simply not able to ban material of this nature.

Myth: The Navy's tradition of stirring the Christmas pudding with wooden oars has been outlawed by the E.C. as unhygienic. Plastic oars will have to be used instead.

Fact: This is nonsense. The relevant directive merely states that materials in contact

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with foodstuffs should not "transfer their constituents in quantities which could endanger human health." The Navy's tradition ought not to be affected in any way.

Myth: The E.C. is to require all zoos and wildlife parks to publicize themselves using the symbol of an elephant, regardless of what the attractions inside might actually be.

Fact: This is wholly untrue. The E.C. has no plans to do anything of the sort and does not even have the power to introduce such legislation.

Myth: Under new E.C. regulations, Christmas trees must be symmetrical in shape, have regularly spaced needles, have identical roots, and be the same color.

Fact: This is wildly off the mark. There are absolutely no E.C. regulations concerning Christmas trees, nor are there to be such regulations in the future.

Myth: Brussels tried but failed to do away with prawn-cocktail, spring-onion, and other specially flavored crisps.

Fact: This is a classic muddle. Actually, in the process of reconciling the various national rules on the amount of sweeteners and flavorings in foods, the E.C. asked all national governments to provide information about these areas. Negotiators overlooked the role that artificial sweeteners play in the production of specially flavored crisps, and consequently they were left off the original proposal. In no way was the commission ever out to ban them.

Myth: Donkeys are to be banned from beaches with Blue Flags, the coveted Euro standard of excellence, and will have to wear nappies [diapers] as a result.

Fact: In the first place, Blue Flags are awarded only to resort beaches, and then only to that part of the beach which forbids donkeys and dogs so that a high standard of cleanliness can be assured to locals and holidaymakers.

Myth: The E.C. has proposed outlawing the dyes that give haddocks their distinctive golden hue.

Fact: The situation is, in fact, just the opposite. The E.C.'s proposal, which sought to regulate, not ban, the amounts of colorings used in foodstuffs, quite specifically included "fish and crustaceous pastes, fish roe, salmon substitute, surimi, smoked and preserved fish." Negotiations for the directive threw up a number of other baseless scares, notably that British sausages could no longer be pink and that mushy peas would have to be gray.

[Dialogue]

THE UGLY TRUTH

From "On Ugliness as a Basic Injustice," a chapter in Women and Men: A Philosophical Conversation, *by Françoise Giroud and Bernard-Henri Lévy, to be published this month by Little, Brown. The book is an edited transcript of a series of discussions on love, sex, and marriage that the two authors had over a period of a month. Giroud is a former French government minister and cofounder of the magazine* L'Express; *Lévy is a philosopher and playwright. Translated from the French by Richard Miller.*

BERNARD-HENRI LEVY: Yesterday I reread Cesare Pavese's journal. He says (I'm quoting from memory): "Women sometimes marry a man for his money, but they usually take the precaution of falling in love with him beforehand." It's blunt, but it's pretty fair.

FRANÇOISE GIROUD: You always love a man for *some* reason—why not for his money? After all, it's a sign of power, and women have nothing against power.

LEVY: Is that your feeling? Do you love power?

GIROUD: Well, not the power money brings! But I'm sensitive to intellectual power, certainly, especially when it's wielded by an unattractive man. My weakness is that I've always loved handsome men.

LEVY: Does that mean that for you attraction has always involved beauty, that an ugly man—I mean objectively ugly, unattractive, one who doesn't conform to generally held notions of handsomeness—doesn't have or wouldn't have had a chance of attracting you?

GIROUD: No chance at all.

LEVY: You wouldn't have been able to love someone who looked like [French sociologist] Raymond Aron, for example?

GIROUD: No, I don't think so.

LEVY: What about Jean-Paul Sartre? You were never attracted to Sartre? He didn't charm you?

GIROUD: Attracted, charmed, yes. But I'd never have wanted him to touch me. And yet—

LEVY: Please! Don't let me hear you say that intelligence can embellish or outshine ugliness. That's too easy. Be sincere and say, truly, whether Sartre's ugliness was an obstacle to you, and of what kind, of what nature. Was it something that spoiled the attraction exerted by his conversation, his books, his fame?

GIROUD: Yes. It was an insurmountable obstacle to any closer relationship. But I knew another frightfully ugly man who was nevertheless immensely attractive, and that was [French newspaper publisher] Pierre Lazareff.



This photograph, by Monica Almeida, appears in Passage to Vietnam, *a collection of photographs published by Against All Odds Productions & Melcher Media, in Sausalito, California. The women pictured above are French tourists in Hue, Vietnam, who have paid to take part in a "royal banquet" at which they dress and eat in the style of the Vietnamese nobility during the French occupation of Vietnam; the banquet is hosted by Nguyen Phuoc Bao Hien, grandson of Emperor Thanh Thai, Vietnam's titular ruler from 1889 to 1907. Almeida is a photographer for the* New York Times.

He wasn't turned down very often. Women dropped like flies. I adored him. But touching him—no. I can be friends with an unattractive man, but I can never be his lover.

LEVY: I'm not surprised to hear you say that about Lazareff. But the same was true of Sartre. He had lots of women around him, and often very pretty ones. Do you remember what he once said? "If I became a philosopher, if I have so keenly sought this fame for which I'm still waiting, it's all been to seduce women basically." And he didn't do too badly in the end. But what if he hadn't been a philosopher and famous? Isn't ugliness the insurmountable handicap? The ultimate injustice?

GIROUD: No, I wouldn't say that. Handsome and stupid—that's no treat either, for a man *or* for a woman! And for a great, great many people ugliness is no obstacle to desire.

LEVY: That's true.

GIROUD: What about you? Have you ever been in love with an ugly woman?

LEVY: In love? Let's not exaggerate.

GIROUD: Have you ever desired one?

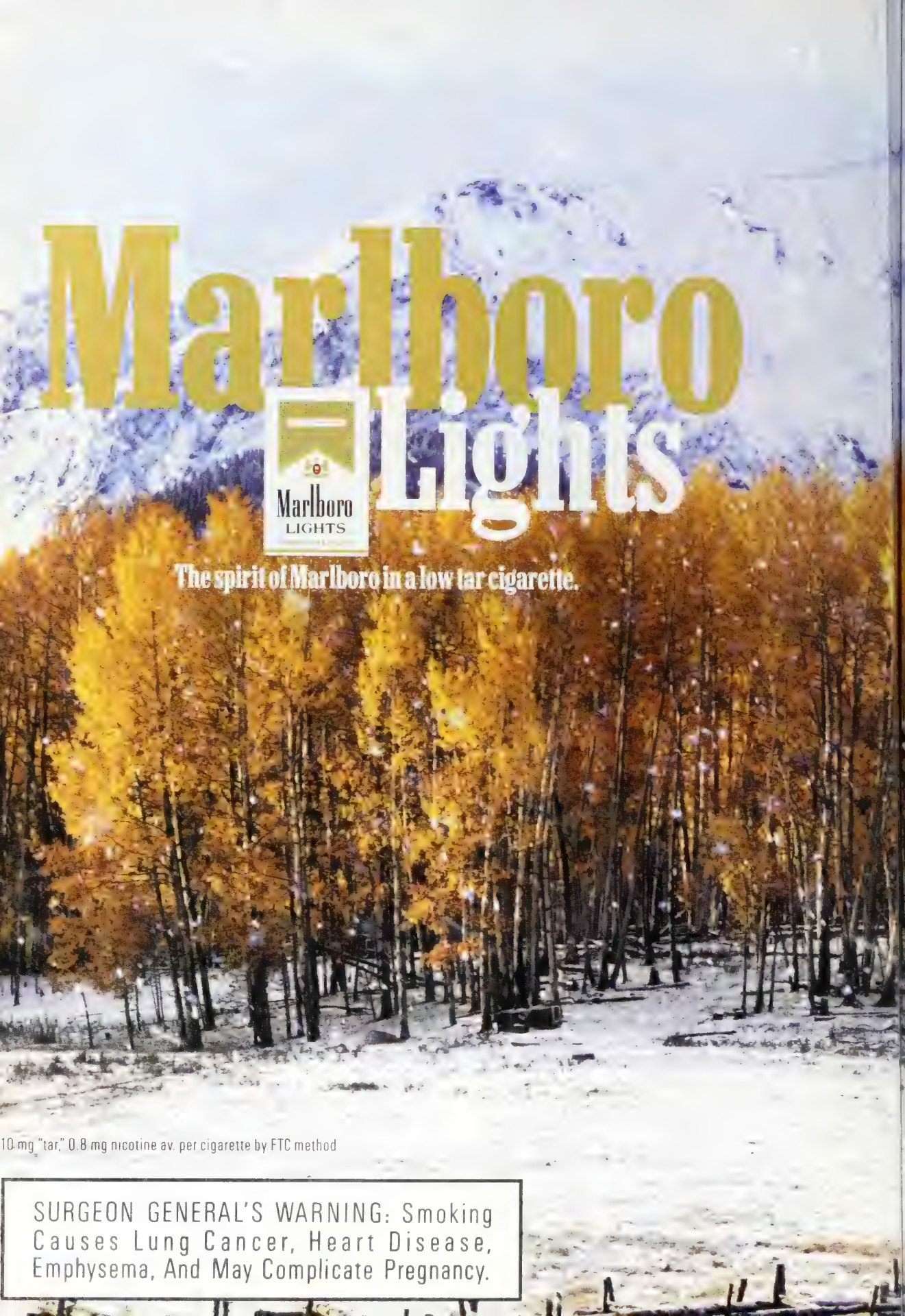
LEVY: Of course.

GIROUD: How was that?

LEVY: As all real lovers know, desire is a strange thing. You can be moved by a voice, a form, a kind of smile, sometimes a name, a family name, the curve of a back, an image or phrase she's spoken, by some unexpected vulgarity—or even one that's not unexpected. And all that can add up—or come down—to a woman who, by all the usual standards, might be regarded as a monster.

GIROUD: A monster! Good lord! I didn't mean to go that far! Have you ever made love to a monster?

LEVY: My case is of no interest. What I'm trying to say is that if desire—or the unconscious—makes a choice, it doesn't do so according to some imbecile logic. Beautiful women? Ugly women? There you have the whole enigma of desire, its fetishism. You think you love a woman, but you really love only a part of a woman, one of her features, a


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detail, an inflection. And there's the opposite too, a reverse fetishism, which is the woman who is truly desired, truly desirable, even lovable, but who suddenly ceases to be so because of some word, some gesture, some small detail.

GIROUD: Yes, desire can be as fragile as it is sudden.

LEVY: Yes, that's it. The fluctuations of desire—and therefore, among other paradoxes, the startling way that ugly women are often very charming.

GIROUD: Can we try to see how that works, how it functions?

LEVY: Ah, it's complicated!

[Advertisement]

PUT A TIGER LILY IN YOUR TANK



The advertisement above is part of a publicity campaign for a line of "sweeter smelling gasoline" introduced last year in France by the Total petroleum company. Hoping to "make filling up a more pleasant experience," the company consulted perfume makers and selected such fragrances as "fruity vanilla." In a press release, the company says it was responding to surveys showing that 41 percent of men and 74 percent of women are "bothered by the smell of gasoline." The products were launched with an ad campaign in women's magazines; the boxes at the top and center right are scratch-and-sniff samples.

GIROUD: Let's have a try!

LEVY: Well, first, there's a touch of masochism: self-disgust, morbid self-regard, inverse narcissism, and so on. There's a touch of sadism: telling a really unattractive woman, "You, too, have your charm, and I'm here to reveal it to you!" And then there's the urge to perform, to show off. Because, contrary to what people always suppose, it's much harder to seduce an ugly woman than a beautiful one.

GIROUD: Really?

LEVY: The beautiful woman is used to it. She's experienced and clever, she's been "broken in," as they say. She knows the tricks and rituals of seduction. You always know very quickly whether it's going to happen or not. Whereas with the ugly woman, she's so flustered, she's so surprised at what's happening to her; she begins by being suspicious, incredulous, by telling herself that there's something going on she doesn't understand, that someone's setting her up. And then afterward, when she has understood, when she realizes you're actually serious and that it's for real, she finds that she doesn't know the rules, she doesn't know the passwords.

GIROUD: Ugliness seen as exciting because it adds to the difficulty of seduction—I'd never thought of that.

LEVY: And yet, my dear Françoise, it's elementary. Not to mention all the ugly woman's so-called complexes. Her body, with which she is all too familiar, her wide hips, her sagging breasts—all those afflictions that she's now going to have to reveal, to share. Desire isn't all that strong. It isn't so irresistible that she can forget her afflictions. That's why I say it's often more difficult to seduce an inexperienced woman than a woman who fulfills all the standards of taste.

GIROUD: That's masculine behavior. The opposite doesn't hold true. It's harder to seduce a handsome man—a man who's used to being pursued—than an unattractive man who's ignored by women. Those ones just melt.

LEVY: The real question is whether ugliness is on the way to becoming our society's major prohibition. That was the perpetual theme of Romain Gary's writing. He maintained that we were living in societies that were based not on consumption but on arousal, on provocation. And he added that of all the methods of arousal, ugliness was the most unacceptable.

GIROUD: Ugly, truly ugly people suffer because of their ugliness, and that's a shame, truly.

LEVY: Not just a shame. And it's not just suffering. We're living in a time that is setting ugliness up as one of its fundamental taboos.

GIROUD: You're forgetting that in the Middle Ages ugly persons were believed to be the

Devil's spawn. We haven't invented anything new.

LEVY: All right, let's look around us, let's examine the language and discourse employed by advertising. I'm not just talking about white teeth, tanned bodies, the dictatorship of beauty, health, and so on, although a lot could be said about this new "hygienics." But—and this is much more disturbing—here we are, living in societies in which anything can be said, anything can be shown, in which nearly everything is either business or show business, and in which there is only one restriction, and that restriction is ugliness. We're all accomplices in that ostracism. You yourself—

GIROUD: Yes, I'll admit that I'd rather see attractive, well-coiffed women. The taboo on ugliness is very powerful, as is the one on age.

LEVY: In May 1968—or perhaps after, I don't remember—there was a newspaper that took as its motto "Free the Ugly." Stupid, of course. Totally terrorist. But what they were trying to say was that ugliness was a bourgeois notion linked to a capitalist ideology, and that it was therefore a matter of the highest priority that ugliness, as a concept, be stamped out. How? By purposely beginning to desire what was ugly? Yes. People were supposed to make up their minds, methodically, to desire ugly men or women. The idea was that for any true, militant revolutionary this was an imperative just as absolute as the fight against the tyranny of the assembly line. The whole thing was silly. But in its silliness there was an insight that wasn't quite so ridiculous—namely, that the question of ugliness sets up a separation, a division, that is, unfortunately, a decisive one, and one that is far more important than people think.

GIROUD: What you're talking about is the revolt against the hypothetical notion that once all social inequities are removed human beings will somehow be fundamentally equal.

LEVY: It's like Mirabeau, the great revolutionary figure, who was so horribly disfigured by smallpox and who cursed Heaven—or whatever took its place—for having allowed him to become so ugly, so unpleasant to look at, so monstrous, and for having at the same time given him a soul—and not only a tender soul but a susceptible, affectionate one. "I curse God," he shouted, "for having put the soul of an Alcibiades into the rotting body of a Philoctetes." He knew utter despair, unparalleled humiliation. "I have all the feelings, passions, desires, virtues of a handsome person—and with them, this horrible body."

GIROUD: Mirabeau seems to have been truly repulsive. However, you know, no one—or almost no one—is satisfied with his or her appearance. Even the most beautiful women are keenly aware of their imperfections. They have convinced themselves that the whole world has its eyes glued on some minor flaw, some defect that they themselves regard as enormous. That's with the exception of a few highly narcissistic women who are literally crazy about the way they look. In general, people don't feel comfortable with themselves, which is why they have such a great need to be seduced, to be reassured.

[Videotapes]

DIRTY MOVIES

From a list of videotapes available to readers by mail order, in issue number 23 of SPLOSH!, *"the wettest, messiest magazine under the sun," published in St. Leonards-on-Sea, England.* SPLOSH! *consists of erotic photos and articles that feature women being covered in mud, food, and various liquids.*

Slimewave: Join our hapless band of pretty partygoers as they try to get to their posh do in their best frocks! But the car breaks down, and the girls have to wade through deep mud and cross a river—only to find deeper mud! Plus Louise Parsons swimming in the sea in her thin dress and French knickers, and two girls getting very sticky with syrup, then covering each other with feathers! £35

Sex, Mud, and Food: Three messy misadventures! Features a custardy kitchen food frolic with curvaceous Clare, Vicky taking a bath in real spaghetti, and Sharon and Vicky getting very dirty with some mud in the garage. £19.99

Treacle Tarts: The naughtiest video we've ever seen, starring Vida Garman and Theresa May rolling on a bed with lots of food! See jam, cream, and mayo rubbed into rude bits. Very saucy! £25.99

A Messy Business: Mud, oil, paint, and food are all poured over Gill in her business suit and Sammy in her satin blouse and blue skirt. Gill starts with a soaking, then has her suit lubricated with oil and sprayed with paint. She gets Sammy back with a big pie, followed by rice pudding and sauce over her head. Next Sammy has her knickers filled with spaghetti before plastering Gill with black paint. Finally, the two massage each other with thick brown mud before Sammy signs off by sitting naked in a creamy cake. £15

[Personal Ad]

LOOKING FOR LOVE, IN LONG PANTS

From an advertisement in the Write to Me/Personals column in the August 30, 1994, issue of The Village Voice.

SWM would appreciate the honest and therefore consistent modesty of a woman who has rejected, or wishes she had always rejected, shorts, slit or short skirts, and kinky naked tights and is disgusted, not delighted, by the self-righteous c-teasers on *The Benny Hill Show*, even when *Cosmopolitan*, *Seventeen*, *Vanity Fair*, En Vogue, MTV, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, *Married with Children*, and sociopathic movie critics whitewash that obnoxious sleaze as "just ever so cute, cool, chic, and delicious." I don't appreciate the hypocrisy of the sick, power-tripping, exhibitionist "modern" woman who hiply studies the sexy dressing, shaping, and posing tricks of women's legs and feet taught by women's magazines, talk shows, Marlene Dietrich, Barbara Stanwyck, Mrs. Robinson, Tina Turner, Madonna, etc.; who gets her sick Sharon Stone kicks by sexually harassing every male in sight (since males are aroused mainly by sight); who reveals the widely shared, sadistic, evil-minded, exhibitionist motives behind her phony casual-innocent act but then exploits the polite reluctance of her victims to call her bluff, like Mary Hart played chatty perky dumb about reaching below the belt for ratings by flashing her legs under the table yet premeditatedly shaved, baked, oiled, stocking-laminated, and insured her legs for millions of dollars—the type who strikes her eat-your-heart-out, liberated-diva pose but then pretends that anyone who acknowledges her sleazy signals traumatizes her fragile, naive, puritanical psyche while she hides behind phony pretexts like fashion, dancing, aerobics, cheerleading, show business, "chastity" (even streetwalkers have more integrity than Catholic-school miniskirt flashers who play both hotter- and holier-than-thou), or the temperature (desert dwellers cover up because shorts just increase the skin cancer and exhibitionism of air-conditioned phonies). Will the special lady who never lives those lies (and preferably also despises the big business–CIA media's favorite stooge-propagandist, Rush Limbaugh) please reply?

[Gestures]

MARGARET MEAD'S BIG NIGHT OUT

From "Nonverbal Courtship Patterns in Women," by Monica M. Moore, in volume 6, issue number 4, of Ethology and Sociobiology, *a journal published in New York City. Moore and her researchers studied the behavior of more than two hundred women in singles' bars, and catalogued the "ensemble of visual and tactile displays emitted by women during their initial meetings with men." In the course of her research, Moore identified fifty-two "nonverbal solicitation behaviors," including the hair flip, the head nod, and the eyebrow flash, as well as those listed below. Moore is a professor of psychology at Webster University, in St. Louis, Missouri.*

There were a number of signals that involved the lips and mouth of the observed subjects. The *lip lick* was seen quite often. The woman opened her mouth slightly and drew her tongue over her lips. Some women used a single lip lick, wetting only the upper or the lower lip, while others ran the tongue around the entire lip area. Another behavior involving the mouth was the *lip pout*. The lips were placed together and protruded. Generally the lower lip was extended somewhat farther than the upper lip so that it was fuller in appearance.

The *whisper* was used by most of the subjects in the sample. The woman moved her mouth near a man's ear, and soft vocalizations presumably were produced.

Several behaviors involved the head and neck region. One example was the *neck presentation*. The woman tilted her head sideways to an angle of approximately forty-five degrees. This resulted in the ear almost touching the ipsilateral shoulder, thereby exposing the opposite side of the neck. Occasionally the woman stroked the exposed neck area with her fingers.

Several women accompanied speech with rapid movements of the hands and arms. This behavior was labeled *gesticulation*. Arms and hands, while held in front of the woman's torso, were waved or extended upward in an exaggerated, conspicuous manner. This behavior was often followed by the man leaning forward.

There were several behaviors that involved inanimate objects. The first of these was the *primp*. In this gesture the woman patted or smoothed her clothing, although it did not appear in need of adjustment. The *skirt hike* was performed by raising the hem of the skirt with

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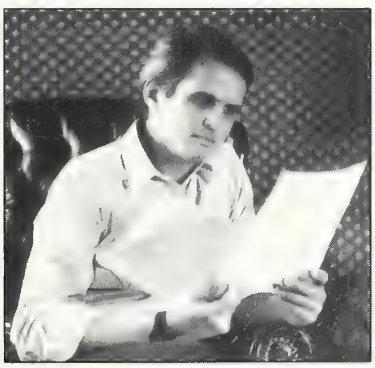
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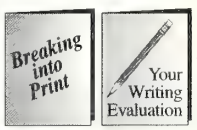
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*The testimonials in this ad were provided voluntarily, without remuneration, by Long Ridge Writers Group students, from 1989 to 1994.

a movement of the hand or arm so that more leg was exposed. This behavior was performed by only two women and in both cases was directed at a particular man. When another man looked, the skirt was rapidly pushed into place. Subjects sometimes "played with" an object in an *object caress*. Keys or rings were often fondled. Glasses were caressed, with the woman sliding her palm up and down the surface of the glass. A cigarette pack was another item frequently toyed with.

Many women touched men in a caressing fashion. In *caress (face/hair)* the woman moved her hand slowly up and down the man's face and neck area or tangled her hands in his hair. In *caress (leg)* the woman was observed stroking the man's thigh and inner leg while the couple was seated. The *buttock pat*, however, occurred while the couple was standing, often dancing. In this gesture the woman moved her hand, palm side inward, up and down the man's buttocks.

There were two behaviors that involved whole body movement. These were called *parade* and *approach*. Parade consisted of the woman walking across the room, perhaps on her way to the bar or restroom. Rather than maintaining a relaxed attitude, the woman exaggerated the swaying motion of her hips. Her stomach was held in and her back was arched so that her breasts pushed out; her head was held high. The other behavior that involved walking was approach. The woman went up to the man and stood very close to him, within two feet. Usually verbal interaction ensued.

[Price List]

AMERICANA, KING-SIZED

From a catalogue issued by the F.A.S.T. Corporation, a manufacturer of "people attractors," located in Sparta, Wisconsin. F.A.S.T. builds giant fiberglass statues of foodstuffs, animals, liquor bottles, and various objects; restaurants, bars, farm stands, and other businesses place the statues in front of their establishments or on their roofs in order to attract customers.

Apple, Delicious (6 ft. high, 200 lbs.): $3,900
Bass, Giant (19 ft. long, 600 lbs.): $9,900
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Cone, Double Dip (11 ft. high, 250 lbs.): $7,200
Cone, Swirl (15 ft. high, 600 lbs.): $13,800
Cow, Life-size (7 ft. long, 120 lbs.): $2,800
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Elk (6 ft. high, 125 lbs.): $4,300
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Golf Bag (11 1/2 ft. high, 600 lbs.): $9,900
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Mosquito, Giant (7 ft. long, 125 lbs.): $3,700
Mouse, with Cheese (7 ft. high, 90 lbs.): $5,000
Mushroom (10 ft. high, 550 lbs.): $8,400
Muskie, Giant (140 ft. long, 8,000 lbs.): $1,000,000
Plate of Ribs, Giant (6 ft. wide, 200 lbs.): $3,300

[Proposal]

LET'S GET SMALL

From The Truth About Your Height: Exploring the Myths and Realities of Human Size and Its Effects on Performance, Health, Pollution, and Survival, *by Thomas T. Samaras, published by Tecolote Publications, in San Diego. Samaras is an engineer and researcher in San Diego.*

We live in a society that is convinced of the benefits of taller stature. Conventional wisdom has it that taller, larger people are more powerful, effective, and intelligent. Men, especially, are often obsessed with height, hoping to reach the magical six-foot mark. This social preference for tallness follows our evolutionary progress: generation by generation, we are getting taller. But it prevents us from looking at size objectively. In actuality, the widespread conceptions about the benefits of taller stature do not stand the test of scientific investigation. If we want to enhance our survival, we need to start grappling with the question of our own increasing size.

Globally, the increasing stature of humans has untold environmental consequences. Everyone knows that we need more energy and natural resources to meet the needs of the

earth's population as it grows. But virtually no one thinks about the increasing needs of people who are growing taller and heavier. Larger human size is directly related to increased energy consumption. The hot water needs of the average household, for example, are a function of size; hot water needs for showers are body-surface-area related, baths are body-volume related. So a population of larger people puts increased demands on hot water heaters.

As people get bigger, the dimensions of various products get bigger. Obviously a six-foot man or woman needs bigger furniture, larger eyeglasses, bigger utensils, larger or longer hand tools, more soap, and more cloth and leather for clothing. The energy consumed in producing these and many billions of other products is considerable.

Shorter people, on the other hand, require considerably less—and exact less of a toll on the environment—in order to enjoy the same general standard of living as taller people. They need less farmland, produce less garbage, generate less air pollution, kill off fewer other life-forms, and require much less water.

There are also economic advantages to a population of smaller, lighter people. If the average American continues to increase in height and weight, consumer packaging will probably have to be adjusted to match increased food requirements. Producing larger portions of cheese, cold cuts, yogurt, cereal, jam, and crackers would require increased farming, processing, packaging, shipping, and storage. As people get bigger, for example, one-quart containers of milk might disappear in favor of half-gallon or one-gallon containers.

Taller and larger people also increase entertainment costs. For instance, they require larger seats and more legroom in cinemas, theaters, and concert halls; this means fewer people can be seated for each performance, which keeps ticket prices high. A similar dynamic occurs in commercial flying. Taller, bigger people take up more room in both width and length of seating space. If people were smaller, airlines could redesign seats, allowing more passengers per flight—at considerable savings to the airlines.

Once we recognize the merits of a population of smaller people, where do we go from there? One approach is for nutritionists to develop a low-calorie, low-fat diet for children that would allow parents to control growth without any harm to the child's mental development or physical health. Gerontologist Roy Walford is convinced that slower growth and reduced size due to caloric restriction will result in longer-living, less sickly, and possibly more intelligent people. Walford believes that we can reduce the average height of people by six to eight inches through dietary restrictions.

Assuming our society changes its values and begins to appreciate the benefits of small hu-

[Analogy]

THE SOFTWARE SCHISM

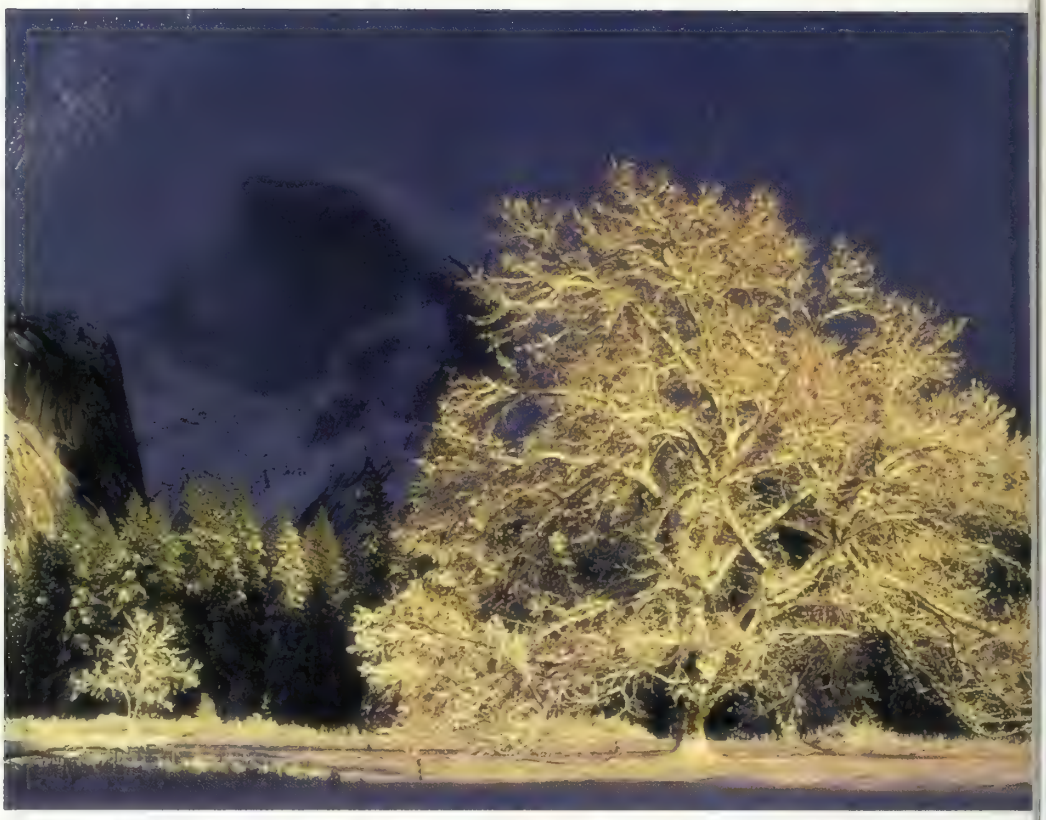
From "La Bustina di Minerva," a column by Umberto Eco, in the September 30, 1994, issue of the Italian journal L'Espresso. *Eco's column was anonymously translated into English and posted on the Internet in October.*

Insufficient consideration has been given to the underground religious war that is transforming the modern world: the division between users of the Macintosh computer and users of MS-DOS-compatible computers. I am firmly of the opinion that the Macintosh is Catholic and that DOS is Protestant. Indeed, the Macintosh is counterreformist and has been influenced by the methodical path of the Jesuits. It tells the faithful how they must proceed step by step to reach—if not the Kingdom of Heaven—the moment in which their document is printed. It is catechistic: the essence of revelation is dealt with via simple formulae and sumptuous icons. Everyone has a right to salvation.

DOS is Protestant, or even Calvinistic. It allows free interpretation of scripture, demands difficult personal decisions, imposes a subtle hermeneutics upon the user, and takes for granted the idea that not all can reach salvation. To make the system work you need to interpret it yourself: the user is closed within the loneliness of his own inner torment.

You may object that, with the passage to Windows, the DOS universe has come to resemble more closely the counterreformist tolerance of the Macintosh. It's true: Windows represents an Anglican-style schism—big ceremonies in the cathedral but with the possibility of returning to DOS to fiddle with things. With Windows, you can still decide to allow women and gays to be priests if you want to.

And what about the machine language that lies beneath both operating systems? Ah, that is the stuff of the Old Testament, Talmudic and cabalistic.



"Half Dome and Elm Tree, Winter," by William Neill. From Yosemite: The Promise of Wildness, *a collection of photographs by Neill with accompanying essays by Tim Palmer, published by the Yosemite Association. Neill has been living in Yosemite National Park since 1977.*

man size, how small should we get? The case of pygmies shows that small people can function very well in fairly rigorous environments. These people stand an average of four feet six inches to five feet tall, so we know this is a practical height. A smaller stature would be limited in physical strength and brain size. Barring more information, it would appear that an average height of four feet to four feet six inches is the smallest we would want to get.

Although many might feel that being tall and well-developed is aesthetically pleasing, we should remember that the standards for physical beauty have changed over the years. Young people are extremely susceptible to whatever standard of beauty is upheld by their peers and the media; many get depressed or lapse into poor health habits if they feel they can never attain society's ideal appearance. If we do nothing else, let's change our attitudes about the importance of tall stature; this, at the very least, would stifle height competition among our youth. A view of beauty that allows for a wide range of human size would make life much easier for all of us.

[Fiction]

BEAUTIFUL EQUATIONS

From Good Benito, *by Alan Lightman, published this month by Pantheon. Lightman is the author of* Einstein's Dreams, *which was excerpted in the January 1993 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Bennett pondered things. He was a ponderer. He wondered why the sky turned red at the end of the day. He wondered why soap bubbles formed in nearly perfect spheres, why all snowflakes had six sides. He wondered why a spoon halfway in water appeared to bend in two, why chalk squeaked. He wondered why a spinning top didn't fall over but instead slowly gyrated. He wondered why the sun didn't burn up, whether outer space went on forever. He wondered why clouds formed high in the air and not on the ground. He wondered how sap could rise in trees, against gravity, what made

rainbows. He wondered why upstairs was usually warmer than downstairs.

He lies on his bed in late afternoon. Why must a focusing mirror be parabolic in shape? Why won't a spherical or flat mirror work? Why? There is a logical reason. He must know what it is. Closing his eyes, he imagines various shapes, pictures the trajectories of light rays. Silvered glass curving. Angles. Rows of imaginary lines, perpendicular to the surface as they undulate through space. Bennett, what are you doing up there? Yellow and gold light rays careening at angles to the perpendiculars, reflecting at equal angles, heading back into space, polished glass flexing and curling. Bennett, you've been spending too much time in your room. Come down. Out of all possible shapes, one shape. A parabola, an arc such that each point is equally distant from a directrix and focus. The hypothetical light rays fly in and emerge, converge to a point, converge to a focus. Glass gently sweeping through space. He has to know why.

The world buckled at its knees when Bennett took his first algebra course. He was thirteen. The class began with word problems, verbal applications of the rules of arithmetic. Mary has three pennies. If she gives two pennies to her younger brother Henry, how many pennies will she have left? Sometime in October, the problems progressed to more thoughtful examples, like: Mary is six years older than Henry, and Henry's age is two-thirds of Mary's. How old is Henry? These conundrums had to be solved by trial and error. Finally, Bennett was taught how to symbolize the unknowns of a problem with *x*'s and *y*'s and to display everything in equations. Using the rules of algebra, the unknowns could be solved for in one logical step. What started with a messy statement involving Mary and her kid brother Henry ended with a single, sleek equation.

Bennett wouldn't have been happy with no mention of Mary and Henry. That kind of problem was for the pure mathematician: consider object A, which is six units greater than object B, whereas object B has a measure two-thirds that of A. No, Bennett was a scientist, and he wanted to begin in the dirt and debris of the real physical world. But he took pleasure in sifting through that world, distilling it, cleansing and purifying it until he was left with a single mathematical equation of inescapable solution.

In his American history class, even after reading the book, the class would argue for days about why the Civil War started. The teacher would argue as well, first giving one reason, then another, walking up and down between

[Poem]

THE REVISIONIST: ON NOAH'S ARK

By Michael J. Bugeja. From the Winter 1993 Georgia Review. Bugeja's most recent collection, After Oz, was published by Orchises Press, in Washington, D.C. He teaches writing and ethics at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University.

You saw it coming, the flood of tears dammed finally
To a trickle. No one understands why you rented
The U-Haul and loaded it at 3 A.M. in the rain
While your husband was out of town again on business.

Lights flick on, off. Neighbors think you have gone
Crazy hitching the car and carrying the children
Bundled asleep in your arms, jiggled in their seats
For the journey. The time has come for hard decisions:

Dogs, cats, birds—yes, but tropical fish?
What about grease ants in your cabinets?
Mice under the bed, roaches in the sink?
Aren't they yours, too? Don't they set the hours—

Intimate beings—when you bake, love, shower?
Don't they serenade you, cantata of crickets
Or bebop of flies on the sill, squirrels on the roof,
Cicadas on the limbs of your favorite weeping willow?

How could you leave, how could you cope,
Without them? Everything here is doomed:
Heirlooms on the mantel, portraits on the wall,
The wicker rocker where you would wait for him,

Creaking like a craft off course. Like Noah
You know that people live or drown but take
Nature with them, even the fleas thumbing a ride.
The spiders will miss you, mosquitoes will mourn.

Who has loved you so well?

the desks, until finally Bennett concluded that no one on earth knew why the Civil War started. It was the same with English and social studies. But algebra was different. There was always an answer, clean as a new Franklin half-dollar. The rules of logic guaranteed an answer. And when you found the answer, there was no arguing about it. You were right, and everyone agreed you were right.

It is early morning, before breakfast. Bennett stands in his room in his pajamas, looking idly out the window at the Taglias' house next door. A cedar fence separates the two houses. Magnolias grow along the fence. But from his bedroom window, Bennett can see over the magnolias, over the fence, and watch the withered old man slowly walk down the driveway to pick up the morning paper. The old man, the grandfather, speaks no English. Sometimes he mutters to himself in Italian. He leans to the left as he walks, slowly lifts each foot as if it were stuck in the asphalt. He is a tiny, thin stick, and he limps slowly down the driveway each morning, beneath the maple trees, to fetch the paper. It is good weather today, but the old man goes in all weather. Bennett has watched him for years. This morning, he estimates the length of the driveway and clocks the old man's walk with his watch and calculates how long it would take him to walk to the moon.

Bennett's classmates hated word problems. Indeed, they hated math altogether, but they'd rather have a tooth filled than be forced to sit down and contemplate word problems. Bennett, on the other hand, placed word problems on a level with Florida's pecan pie. Word problems were delicious. He devoured them. He convinced the flabbergasted Mrs. Dixon to give him additional problems, beyond the assignments, and when she ran out of problems he created them himself. After school, when the other boys played basketball or loitered behind the Rexall drugstore to smoke and discuss girls, Bennett went home and up to his room to do word problems.

His mother would come out of her bedroom where she'd been resting, wearing her pale amber robe, and stand at the foot of the stairs. Bennett, what are you doing up there? she would call up to him, in a polite voice. Nothing, he'd answer. Then he'd hear some whispering, and Marty or Philip would ascend halfway up the stairs and recite as he'd been told: Bennett, what are you doing in your room? Masturbating, Bennett would answer. Don't come up. After a moment, his mother would call up again: Sammy Abrams is such a nice boy, and he's invited you over to play. I don't like Sammy Abrams, Bennett would answer through his closed door. What about Michael Solmson? replied his mother. He's a lovely boy. I don't like Michael Solmson, Bennett would answer. Then his mother again: You're selfish and you're going to grow up miserable, with no friends.

Bennett didn't understand why his mother called him selfish for staying in his room. In those years, and for many years after, he was terribly confused by what people said. One fall, after his weekly allowance was reduced by twenty-five cents, his mother explained that since the family business was doing well, it was a good time to save money rather than spend it. On another occasion, Bennett's cousin Laura, in her early twenties, announced that she was breaking up with her boyfriend because she loved him too much. Could that be what she meant? Bennett learned to hide his confusion and just nod his head. Then he'd go to his room to do word problems. He thought everybody should learn how to do word problems.

One o'clock in the morning. Old man Taglia walks at this hour, unobserved, his house dark and asleep. He limps slowly in the moonlight. There is another light. He looks up to his left, toward the second-floor window. *Che diavolo, ci risiamo,* he mutters, and continues down the driveway.

Bennett sits at his oak desk. They are so beautiful, the equations. Even visually beautiful, but especially beautiful in the mind. Their precision and power are beautiful, and as he begins to understand an equation, he gets the same feeling as seeing a moonrise over trees. In his mind, it is dark and still, and then the tops of the trees on the far side of the bay begin to glow slightly, white and soft, and the white gets brighter, silhouetting the trees, and then a small piece of moon appears and the mathematics opens up and shines in perfection. It is one in the morning, but he is not tired. He gains strength from himself. He does not need to go to the library. He does not need to ask other students or grown-ups for information or help. He can be here alone, in his room, with the beautiful mathematics and the moon, and figure things out on his own. He can sit here naked at his oak desk with the clean, white paper and work in the absolute certainty and the solitude and perfection. Gliding through the world in his mind, he doesn't worry about his small height or his pimples or his problems with talking or his confusion at what people say. It is a world without bodies. It is a world of clear logic and grace. It is the best part of loneliness, without the sadness. ■

VIOLENT CERTAINTIES

A REPORT FROM A MILWAUKEE ABORTION CLINIC, WHERE THE CROWD OUTSIDE BRANDISHES THE WEAPONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE WOMEN INSIDE BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THEIR CHOICE

BY VERLYN KLINKENBORG

In the United States, there are two main landscapes of abortion. One is a historic landscape, real enough in the days before 1973 and *Roe* v. *Wade*—and always potentially real. But it's also a landscape that hasn't relinquished its almost allegorical power to express guilt about abortion in a country where, legally speaking, guilt is no longer necessary. "Back-alley" is the word people use to bring this landscape to mind, although it's a different place to everyone who troubles to imagine it. To me, it suggests a low door set between rows of garbage cans at the bottom of an air shaft, the kind of place a New York City landlord would call a "garden" apartment, although the garden is nothing more than a platform of concrete, an iron railing, and a wall of damp bricks with ailanthus breaking through the cracks. The interior is sparse, virtually unfurnished, or it's furnished inappropriately, like an old-fashioned parlor with heavy upholstery and an aroma of seedy, antiquated housekeeping that carries unintended moral overtones. It is ill equipped, like the Encino abortion clinic

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in Joan Didion's 1970 novel *Play It As It Lays*, which has "two hardbacked chairs with pillows tied over the backs" instead of gynecological stirrups. The doctor is repugnant, even when he tries to be sympathetic, because he believes his task is repugnant. Sympathy here feels like an anodyne, administered only to keep the patient still, the procedure short. This landscape and what happens in it are parodies of modern medicine, a cruel parody too of sexual contact. Emotion is squandered in this place. No one hesitates to talk about money here. It's the only thing likely to be made explicit.

The second landscape of abortion exists in the present—it is real—and yet it seems to have acquired little power over the imagination so far, because it has been built recently and has almost none of the surface grain, the irregularities, that the imagination preys upon. This landscape has only the unmediated blankness of ordinary life until something remarkable happens, and then, for an instant, its ordinariness is seized upon and made evident, extraordinary. In the second landscape, for certain persons, suffering is congenial, how congenial it is hard for ordinary people to understand. With the election of Bill Clinton, the abortion controversy shifted onto new ground. The aim of the previous Republican administrations, in making appointments to the Supreme Court, had been to create a Court that would overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*, the decision that legalized abortion in 1973. In fact, the Supreme Court, when given the chance in 1992, in the case of *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania* v. *Casey*, did not do so (although it upheld restrictions on abortion that displeased some members of the pro-choice community). For many extreme anti-abortionists, the election of Bill Clinton and his open support of abortion rights meant a return to the political desert, where suffering brought a heightened sense of identity and purpose.

For many extreme anti-abortionists, the election of Bill Clinton and his open support of abortion rights meant a return to the political desert

On July 29, 1994, Paul Hill, a well-known anti-abortionist, murdered Dr. John Britton and an escort, James Barrett, by firing a shotgun at them as they sat parked near an abortion clinic in Pensacola, Florida, the same city in which Michael Griffin shot and killed Dr. David Gunn as he crossed a clinic parking lot in March 1993. Hill became the first person brought to trial and convicted under the provisions of the new Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which was signed by President Clinton only ten weeks before the murders. On November 2, Hill was convicted in Florida on two counts of first-degree murder. Throughout these proceedings, he maintained the studied detachment of a man who believes he knows how to find sustenance in the desert.

Paul Hill, and men and women like him, are now familiar figures in the second landscape of abortion. Through this landscape there runs a road—not the kind of road that turns into a narrative but the kind that turns into a shopping strip. The road points east and west. The stoplights stretch ahead at customary intervals. On one side of the road, a mile or two back, there are several old farmsteads, now for sale, commercially zoned, their edges abandoned to brush. There's a cluster of town offices, reminders, like the farmsteads, that the road has temporarily broken free of the city, which lies not far away, and has entered a separate municipality or suburb. On the other side of the road, a continuous parking lot has begun, a continuous storefront interrupted only by gas stations and fast-food restaurants and major boulevards running north and south. Soon the continuous parking lot begins on this side of the street. The auto dealerships. The furniture stores. The malls. The mini-malls. The franchises. Convenience here is an abstraction of the highest order, as it is in most of America. Every impulse ends in a parking lot, at a cash register or a barcode scanner.

But there is one building set back from the road, a three-story glazed-brick building that houses a suite of medical offices—including a women's health center offering gynecological services, counseling, and abortions—although it could as easily accommodate an accounting firm or an insurance agency. The other buildings along this road, buildings with numbingly familiar shapes and names, have replaced the natural terrain with the suddenness and completeness that most Americans accept as a meaningless premise on which convenience depends. But this building is singular. Because it isn't one of a nationwide chain of stores or restaurants or gas stations, it didn't seem to spring up overnight, so fast and, apparently, so inevitable that no one remembers what was there before. Looking at this building, you can imagine a marsh being drained before the foundation could be laid, a grassland turned under or trees felled before the parking lot could be paved. Now, after a few years, the building is almost invisible. Its sign—

/hich looks discreet but is only inexpensive—as weathered, and the low chain-link fence surrounding the parking lot sifts the current of air he traffic kicks up.

A different kind of bleakness marks each of hese two landscapes. The first has the bleakness f guilt, of illegality and furtive dominance. The econd has the commercial bleakness that Americans have allowed to be erected everywhere in this country. There is no point in confusing the two. I made that mistake when I first ame to Milwaukee in November of 1993. When I pulled into the parking lot of the Wisonsin Women's Health Care Center in the orthern section of that city, amid the present-ay landscape I have just described, I mistook he ugliness of my surroundings for an indication f the ugliness of my subject. I parked my car nd, without thinking twice about what I was oing, walked across the parking lot to the en-rance of what local pro-choice activists have ome to call, by metonymy, the Brown Deer linic, a practice owned by Dr. Paul Seamars on he third floor of a medical building at 8634 West Brown Deer Road.

Brown Deer is a busy shopping artery, the ind where it nearly always feels like a Saturday fternoon when there's nothing better to do han go to the mall. On the north side of Brown Deer there is a public sidewalk separated from he curb and pavement by a buffer of grass. Then there is a waist-high chain-link fence, /hich cordons off the parking lot of 8634. The arking lot is private, which means that admison to it is at the landlord's discretion, although here is no gate. I did not understand that the attle over abortion in Milwaukee had largely een a battle to control this parking lot, nor did understand the real shape of that battle or who he adversaries really were.

Once inside the building at Brown Deer, a visitor is confronted by several choices: an elevator, a staircase, a walk-in clinic on the first floor, a dentist's office on the second floor, Paul Seamars's office on the third floor. But just to the right of the en-rance, there's another door. It leads to a clus-er of rooms with the dreary, hopeful neutrality f office space awaiting tenants. The previous ccupants seem to have left behind only some ackets of coffee creamer and an air of ex-austed potential, which is perhaps just the nell of a carpet that needs cleaning. In the ont room, a large window faces south, to-ard Brown Deer Road. The window has linds, and it appears to have been coated ith a reflective one-way film. I first saw this oom early the next morning, at about 6:30, a Saturday. A small huddle of people had gathered there, out of the cold. They were members of the Milwaukee Clinic Protection Coalition (MCPC). They stood near two tripods, one supporting a video camera, the other supporting a 35-millimeter still camera with a 300-millimeter lens. There was a two-way radio hooked up to the battery from a defunct Oldsmobile. The photographic equipment belonged to a man named David Ritz, who has been called by Milwaukee anti-abortionists a "satanic, Semitic sodomite," an epithet he quotes ironically. He has a deep reedy voice, a wife, three children, and an apparently perplexing pierced ear. "Welcome to the duck blind," he said.

I looked through the lens of the still camera. It was pointed across the parking lot and was focused on three or four men and women standing on the sidewalk. In effect, the parking lot had disappeared in the spatial compression of the telephoto lens. The sun was just beginning to nudge the horizon, and the rising light illuminated the breaths of the men and women caught in the viewfinder. They were smiling. "They smile all the time," said a woman named Catey Doyle, who was standing in the room with me. The people on the sidewalk were dressed in the nondescript way of winter. They looked like they were on strike. They moved slowly, as if the air had begun to gel around them. I raised my head from the camera and could see four or five cars in the lot and a band of persons standing near the entrance to the building. They were dressed in much the same way as the people on the sidewalk, but they wore green bibs provided by the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARRAL). The bibs identified them as clinic defenders and escorts.

I took a seat and David Ritz placed in my hands an oversized three-ring binder. He and his colleagues in the MCPC call it the "Rogues' Gallery." It is a collection of several hundred photographs, printed from computer disks, of the principal extremists in the American anti-abortion movement, all of them photographed outside Milwaukee clinics over the last year or two. On each sheet there was an ID number, an address, a record of the subject's known group or church affiliation, a date, and a précis of the subject's rap sheet—all part of a database that Ritz has spent years assembling. There were Lambs of Christ—members of a violent, drifting sect of anti-abortionists. There were Missionaries to the Preborn—members of a radical anti-abortion group that has close ties to a "Christian" radio and TV channel in Milwaukee with the call letters WVCY (the "Voice of Christian

Youth"). There were Youth for America and CALL girls (Collegians Activated to Liberate Life). There were members of Operation Rescue. There were members of Advocates for Life Ministries, a group based in Portland, Oregon, one of whom, Shelley Shannon, was photographed outside a Milwaukee clinic six months before she shot and wounded Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas, on August 19, 1993. There were a few unaffiliated soloists. There were no photographs of what members of the Milwaukee Clinic Protection Coalition call ODCs: Ordinary Decent Christians.

Nearly all the persons pictured had blockaded abortion clinics—forcibly prevented patients from entering their doors—in Milwaukee, Atlanta, Wichita, and elsewhere around the country. They had harassed doctors and their patients. They had "speedbumped"—thrown themselves in front of cars in order to prevent patients and doctors from moving. They had "hoodsurfed"—climbed onto patients' cars as they tried to enter clinic parking lots. They had driven vans into the front and rear doors of Brown Deer. They had shackled themselves to cement-filled, rebar-reinforced, fifty-five-gallon drums at another Milwaukee clinic. Some of the anti-abortionists in the Rogues' Gallery had been implicated in arson and butyric acid attacks on abortion clinics. (Butyric acid is an almost ineradicable chemical compound that smells like human vomit.) Some had broken into abortion clinics and stolen fetal remains. Several had defended, in print, the shooting of abortion providers. They were conspirators and, almost inevitably, the camera treated them conspiratorially. The faces seemed larger than life somehow, and the additional grain caused by the photo enlargement only increased their menace. They were hard, blank, tired, engorged with anger. They were flat. They had the wrong hair, the wrong eyebrows, the wrong clothes, and they came from the wrong places. I did not blame the camera. I got up and looked through the viewfinder again at the men and women on the sidewalk. They seemed ordinary, their physical presence negligible. They seemed like the kind of people you'd meet outside a paper mill or at the races.

While I was down in the duck blind, Paul Seamars was upstairs in his receptionist's office, making coffee, talking with MCPC members, welcoming patients he would not be able to see for another hour or two until the rest of his staff arrived. Seamars is a small man in his mid-thirties, brisk, matter-of-fact, a native of Idaho Springs, Colorado. He wears his fair hair short. Though the waiting and examination rooms at his clinic have a warm, efficiently feminine feel to them—as pleasant as a pediatrician's office—he keeps his private office almost bare of ornament, perhaps because he rarely has a chance to sit down in it. On his desk there's a small ceramic figure of an old bald man seated on a toad and smoking a pipe. There's a clock illustrated with tennis balls and a tennis court. On Seamars's shelves are the journals and books you would expect to find in the office of a gynecologist who offers abortion services. He is one of only a handful of abortion providers in Wisconsin, and his patients come from all over the Midwest.

Seamars speaks rapidly with a slightly nasal inflection, an accent that is neither Mountain West nor Milwaukee. On the day we met, he sat quietly behind his desk, pausing occasionally to take a phone call. "It's real unpredictable," he said to me. "Some days we'll have a blockade where we can't get in for two hours. It really is very detrimental to patient care. We used to be able to schedule patients all the way through the day. But since we had all the blockading going on and then the Clinic Protection Coalition was formed, they could only get their people out there for a few hours in the morning, say from 6:30 to maybe 11, so we had to get all our patients in by 11. But we decided that was a better way to go than scheduling them later and having blockades in the afternoon and subjecting them to the harassment out in the parking lot. Because what [the anti-abortionists] used to do, they'd see a female come in the lot, and five, ten of them would run up right in front of the front and back door and then another three or four would just attack the car and start yelling at the patient through the windows, screaming, stuffing pamphlets through the windows."

Entering private property to block a door to a building is a form of trespass. Harassing patients can lead to a charge of disorderly conduct. In most American cities, persons blockading and harassing would be arrested by the police and then charged by the district attorney with criminal trespass or disorderly conduct. Not in Milwaukee. E. Michael McCann is the Milwaukee district attorney. "Mike McCann, he's an institution here," said Seamars. "He's been district attorney for twenty, thirty years. No one ever runs against him. People think he does a good job. He won the Jeffrey Dahmer case." But McCann opposes abortion and considers harassment and blockading to be First Amendment activities, even when they prevent a woman from exercising her legal rights. "When I looked for office space," Seamars said, "we looked into all the local laws and the state laws and felt comfortable. . . . And then we were told by our local police captain, 'Hey, nothing we can do. They're booked, they're given a ticket, they don't even

have to pay anything on that day, and they're released that afternoon. If they want to come back and block your doors that afternoon, they can do that. Nothing we can do about it.' Milwaukee, probably, two years ago had the least stringent laws, or the least likelihood that you'll end up in jail for blocking the door. So [anti-abortionists] moved here from everywhere.

"Our largest blockade was 540 arrests," said Seamars, describing the day of August 8, 1992. 'We're on about Eighty-sixth Street here. They were from Seventy-sixth up to about Ninety-sixth along the road. There were five hundred and some people in front of my front and back door. They were actually lying out on Brown Deer. They had this whole highway shut down. The police couldn't get through with their paddy wagons for like an hour. It was just incredible."

Until last May, when President Clinton signed the FACE Act, which provides stiff federal penalties for persons blockading clinics or harassing patients and clinic personnel, the only legal tool available to the Wisconsin Women's Health Care Center and the other four abortion clinics in Milwaukee was a permanent injunction order, brought in circuit court on December 10, 1992, by the State of Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee against the Missionaries to the Preborn, Youth for America, thirty-eight named defendants, and anyone, whether named or not, who acted in concert with them. (It is similar to a Florida injunction whose provisions were largely upheld by the Supreme Court in June 1994.) With the help of an overworked city attorney and the diligence of the MCPC in providing evidence against anti-abortion extremists, this injunction has proved effective.

Despite the success of the MCPC at keeping Milwaukee's clinics open and protecting its abortion providers, I noticed a persistent feeling of frustration among its members. They were troubled by the knowledge that most Americans have no idea what kind of struggle is going on in Milwaukee or what it implies for the country at large. The MCPC had established links with all the major pro-choice organizations and clinic defense groups in the United States, yet there was still the ominous feeling that its worst enemy was not anti-abortion extremists but the unknowing complacency of the American public. Catey Doyle is a partner in the law firm of McCarty, Lenz & Doyle, which has offices on Water Street overlooking downtown Milwaukee. (She is also the sister of the Wisconsin State attorney general, Jim Doyle.) She is in her mid-forties and is one of three wry women at the heart of the MCPC.

"My feeling," said Doyle, "is that the majority of Americans don't even want to think about abortion. They want to know that that clinic exists somewhere—if their daughter goes out on her senior prom and gets drunk and pregnant, which happens all the time, they want to know that place exists. They want to know that they can take their daughter there and get in without a problem and having people harass them or being harassed afterward. That's a big issue. But they don't want to think about it. And to fight for its existence means they have to think about it, they have to get involved with it, they have to know it exists, they have to know who works there, they have to know how it operates. The majority of people just want to know that it's a right and that they can get it if they need it."

A month before I first came to Milwaukee, sixty or seventy anti-abortionists trapped Paul Seamars at his lakeshore home in rural Waukesha County at 4:30 in the morning. Seamars called the police, who tried to clear a way to the road for him. When his garage door opened onto a rainy driveway without a hint of dawn, Seamars was carrying a video camera. "October 16, 5:20, just getting ready to leave my house," he says. His car moves slowly down the drive, and in the distance, under the unsteady illumination of headlights and police spotlights, you can see an indistinct mass of people, signs held high, and two local policemen walking alongside the front fenders of the car. As he moves, the car barely crawling, Seamars names the faces he knows. Cynthia Hummitzsch, then the head of a local fundamentalist school called West Suburban Christian Academy. Dale Pultz and George Wilson, full-time Missionaries to the Preborn. Michael Skott, the pastor of Gospel of Grace Ministries, a storefront fundamentalist congregation on Kinnickinnic Street in downtown Milwaukee. Matt Trewhella, the pastor of the fundamentalist Mercy Seat Christian Church, which meets in a room at the Sheraton Mayfair Hotel in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Gary McCullough, who writes a newsletter called "Prisoners of Christ," which lists persons who have been jailed for anti-abortion violence. Paul

"Americans don't want to think about abortion. They want to know that if their daughter goes out and gets pregnant, a clinic exists somewhere"

Seamars had reason to worry that morning. In a press release issued by Defensive Action, Paul Hill's organization, the day after Shelly Shannon was arrested for shooting Dr. Tiller, Matt Trewhella said, "What we have here is one person acting in defense of other persons who are about to be killed. This was not an act of vengeance, this was an act of protection." And in a recent article, Gary McCullough had proclaimed that Michael Griffin, the convicted murderer of Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida, "is a hero, though I doubt this generation will recognize him as such."

The rain is falling, and the car has come to a halt. Michael Skott is pointing a video camera at Paul Seamars, who is pointing a video camera at Michael Skott. McCullough circles around to the right of the car. Hummitzsch leans in against the driver's-side window and glowers. The crowd moves with the shambling gait that led MCPC members to christen this event "The Night of the Living Dead." The car stops and the police point Seamars back to his garage. He backs in and waits. Ten minutes later he tries again. This time there are more cops. Seamars makes it halfway down the drive when there is the abrupt motion of persons throwing themselves under the car and the purposeful stooping of the cops who are trying to remove them. The crowd circles the car. Several people carry what clinic protectors sometimes call AKCs: signs that say ABORTION KILLS CHILDREN. One sign says YOUR NEIGHBOR KILLS PREBORNS. Only once does Seamars betray any emotion. Under his breath he says, "Get this fucker away from me—this asshole away from me now." A police officer tells Seamars that they are going to have to escort him back to his house on foot because one anti-abortionist has handcuffed himself under the car and another has wrapped his arms around the axle and superglued his hands together. It will take the Fire Department to free them. The camera jolts up and down as several policemen jog with Seamars back to his house, where his wife says, "I didn't want you out there."

There is a look that the human face assumes when the mind stops considering variables, and that is what I saw outside the clinics: the look of zealotry

Then, in the broadening dawn, David Ritz begins to videotape the crowd—which is videotaping him—because the police are trying to take Seamars out to the road in a cruiser. Again the car is halted by anti-abortionists diving under the wheels. Again the police stoop to arrest them, to lay them facedown on the wet driveway. You can hear the zipping sound of plastic hand restraints—zipcuffs—being pulled tight. A woman shouts at the police, "It's the guy inside you should be hurting." A young man in a jacket with a cavernous hood turns to Ritz and says, in an adolescent snarl, "Hope you got a bulletproof vest, man. We're gonna come get you." Eventually, the police take Seamars by boat to a pickup point across the lake from his house, and he is driven to Brown Deer, where the day goes on as normal.

I have watched this videotape perhaps a dozen times, and I have picked out the faces of men and women I have passed while walking into Milwaukee's four abortion clinics. What I found myself looking for in that predawn crowd was a point of continuity, or discontinuity, that would explain how these people, the extreme fringe of the anti-abortion movement, differ from occasional anti-abortion protesters and from people who oppose abortion but do not protest and, ultimately, from the patients and clinic defenders themselves. Their voices reminded me of the voices that fill an auditorium or a town hall when a public hearing turns strident, the kind of hearing that's held when toxic waste has been found leaking into basements or a halfway house is being planned down the street. I had heard those voices too when I was a student at Berkeley in the early 1970s, and I had seen the same sense of grim, clever purpose in the faces of antiwar protesters, some of whom would have speedbumped and hoodsurfed and superglued their hands together if those things had seemed as persuasive as throwing rocks at cops or overturning cars owned by the Atomic Energy Commission and the U.S. Air Force.

Perhaps there was something ordinary and amorphous in the lives of some members of this crowd milling around outside Paul Seamars's house, something unshapable, as there is in most lives. Perhaps when the talk turned away from abortion some of them lost focus, their intensity suddenly dimmed, and they came to resemble, say, public-school teachers at an administrative meeting. But the more I watched, the more I understood that there was something terribly hard in these people as well, a ferocious, alienating certainty. There is a look that the human face assumes when the mind stops considering variables, and that is what I saw repeatedly outside the clinics: the look of

zealotry. For someone wearing that face, the only questions remaining to be answered are tactical ones. I talked one day to a man named Drew Heiss, who was carrying a sign that said I WILL ADOPT YOUR BABY. "He used to be crazy," said Catey Doyle. "He'd stand there just at the edge of that parking lot screaming at Paul horrible, horrible things." But for some reason Heiss has changed, some variable has appeared where once there was none, or perhaps he has simply refined his tactics. Now he will talk. We talked, and we got no further than this: "Well," said Heiss, "now that we're on the Christian aspect and we're right in front of an abortion mill, do you feel Jesus approves of abortion?" What answer is it possible to make to that presumptuous riddle?

I realized then how hard it is to preserve some balance between the dictates of faith and the dictates of social reason, to disapprove of abortion and call yourself a Christian and at the same time separate yourself from the anti-abortion extremists. Abortion is the kind of issue in which a single point of contact with the terrorist fringe—belief in God or the conviction that life begins at conception—can be construed as alliance. For among the biblical fundamentalisms cherished by that crowd standing in Seamars's driveway in the rain, none seems more important or more seductive than the sense of being a persecuted minority, common to Jews in the Old Testament and to Christians in the New. There is a community, a bond, in opposition. Persecution is election, even when it is self-persecution, a martyrdom in the parking lot.

The day after my first visit to Paul Seamars, I drove to Madison, Wisconsin, seventy-seven miles west, to visit another abortion provider, a physician named Liz Karlin. The landscape of her clinic, the Women's Medical Center at 5520 Medical Circle in the southern section of Madison, is essentially the same as the landscape at Brown Deer—a suite of offices, a chain-link fence, a parking lot—although in Karlin's case the shopping strip is a short block away and there are mature trees in sight. Only a few protesters had gathered when I arrived, an elderly couple praying and a woman holding rosary beads.

Karlin is fifty, a tall, robust woman with a tendency to say exactly what she means, often with a deep, appealing laugh. She grew up on Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, attended Bronx Science high school, and graduated from Antioch College with a degree in philosophy. After having two children and spending a number of years in rural Tanzania with her then husband, a historian, she returned to school, got her M.D., and became an internist in Madison and a part-time faculty member at the University of Wisconsin. When Susan Wicklund, a much harassed abortion provider working at the time in Appleton, Wisconsin, needed surgery, Karlin was invited to fill in after she had been trained in abortion procedures by another doctor in Madison.

In the past few years, Karlin has emerged as a prominent speaker on the issue of women's reproductive health. Whenever she can, she talks to groups of first- and second-year medical students ("before they're made stupid and stodgy by the system," she says) and to organizations such as the American Medical Women's Association. Unlike Paul Seamars, whose essentially private nature has been intensified by anti-abortion protests, Karlin has used the anti-abortion controversy against the extremists themselves. "They have extended the scope of my audience," she says. "I have access to a larger audience, not because of who I am or what I do but because protesters have been jumping up and down and made something of me." Karlin has the ability to cut to the heart of an issue without losing her sense of humor—she talks, for instance, of asking someone to carry a sign outside her clinic saying SEMEN CAUSES ABORTION—but her purpose is wholly serious. She lectures frankly on the need for sexual responsibility, the need to end unhealthy sexuality. She has in mind nothing less than changing the way medicine is practiced in this country.

"I saw that a lot of the women in my practice had very tough lives," Karlin told me that afternoon. "Their childhoods were tough. There was a lot of alcohol; there was a lot of abuse, sexual, physical. They were treated poorly, they were humiliated. And as a result they were sick. They were psychically sick. And when I went to the clinic in Appleton, I said, 'These are the same as my patients, thirty years younger. Maybe I can do something earlier rather than later.' And so I saw it as a preventive-health intervention.

"The need for an abortion is just a symptom, and I treat it as such. I mean, I can do the procedure, but it's very much like a cardiovascular surgeon and coronary artery bypass surgery. Someone comes in with a lifestyle that's going to lead her to need this. Okay, you do it. Then can you change the lifestyle or can you not?"

I had spent the morning at the Women's Medical Center, listening to the staff, listening to patients. In layout it's much like other doctors' offices: a quiet waiting room, a receptionist's office, then a double set of corridors joined by connecting passageways lined with cabinets and counters. On a bulletin board there are

snapshots of anti-abortionists who have picketed the clinic since it opened four years ago. There is a kitchen crowded with all the miscellaneous stuff that piles up in a busy medical office—coffee mugs, journals, the paraphernalia that pharmaceutical companies are always sending doctors. But nothing there reminded me of that antiquated, allegorical landscape of abortion, that realm of dingy offices where everything has taken on the shine of overuse, the pessimism of moral fatigue.

"I had the picture," Karlin said, "that an abortionist would be this filthy guy and it would be a filthy office and there would be women screaming, like a 1940s hospital, with nothing but these little curtains between them. I don't like the traditional way that people run clinics and do abortions. If I don't know why [the patients are] there or whether they'll be able to use birth control, it's not interesting for me to do the procedure. I have to talk to them and I have to connect with them. What I'm trying to do is empower women in trouble to get out of trouble, or to help them empower themselves, or to say, 'You have the strength to empower yourself.' That's what goes on in there.

The decision to have an abortion, no matter how consensual or appropriate, is never quite closed, even in the waiting room of a clinic

"I have people who say, 'I can't take pain.' Where does this come from that they can't take pain? Either it comes from old stuff, and they were seriously hurt as kids and have that mammoth fear, or somebody told them that once. And here I am, I've got their legs spread apart, I'm putting needles in their cervix, and then the little vacuum cleaner, and they're doing just fine. And I say, 'Could your boyfriend stand this?' And they say, 'No! The way he whines when he has a cold, no!' And I say, 'Then where did it come into your head that you're too weak to tolerate pain? Because look, all I know is that I've been hurting you here for the last four minutes and you've been doing just fine.' "

Listening to the women who had come to Dr. Karlin's office that morning, I saw how deeply they anticipated judgment of some kind, perhaps even more than the possibility of pain itself. One after another, they sat across a desk from Verna Hill, who was a nurse, a Catholic grandmother, and the primary counselor at the Women's Medical Center. (She died last June.) The women who entered Hill's office almost shrank from her compassion. They were utterly unaccustomed to her frankness. ("We're not here suctioning his penis today, are we?" she said to one surprised young woman.) The more I listened, the more it seemed as though they were trying to hide from themselves or from what they had been taught to think of themselves. Here is the voice of one of them, a nineteen-year-old student, speaking, as it were, to the ghosts of her parents. "It was stupid. We weren't using anything. It was really stupid. I knew it was wrong." Neither she nor her partner had been tested for AIDS. None of the women who allowed me to sit with them had been tested for AIDS. That was alarming, but it was no less alarming than just how little it took to interrupt their birth control. Here is the voice of another young woman, also nineteen. "I don't have a job. I don't have the money to support—I mean I just think it's cruel to have it and bring it into the world not having the means to take care of it. So, I figured, you know, it's my problem and I have to deal with it, and this is the way I want to deal with it. I took the shot, the three-month shot [Depo-Provera]. I was using the pill but I ran out of them. So . . ." Her voice trailed off, leaving a foregone conclusion hanging in the air.

"All of these women feel they're doing something wrong by being here," said Karlin, "all of them, 100 percent—without having the cognitive process that if you're not using fantastic birth control and if you're not absolutely vigilant, you will be here. Or you will have a child. These are the only options. I think somewhere in the learning process we lost the knowledge that intercourse leads to pregnancy."

The clarity I heard in the voices of Liz Karlin and her staff was, I realized, partly the result of daily exposure to women of every reproductive age who usually did not feel much clarity about the decision they were making or who attained what clarity they had only through an unaccustomed effort of will. It was difficult for them to be there. It exposed them to what Catey Doyle had called a right they didn't want to think about. Listening to the staff at the Women's Medical Center, I was always aware of the silence emanating from the waiting room, where women sat alone, or with a lover, or with a parent or friend, and where no conversation lasted longer than a few sentences before enlarging the silence. I had sat in a similar place myself, as a male friend, and I remembered that when you saw couples who seemed to have a togetherness, a closeness, between them, that was not necessarily what you

ere seeing. What you were seeing was proba-
ly a hopeful or despairing man hovering near
ıe profound inwardness of a woman who was
stening to her thoughts or to what were not
et thoughts but only a kind of thrumming
ong her veins and muscles. The decision to
ave an abortion, no matter how consensual
r appropriate, is never quite closed, even in
ıe waiting room of a clinic, if only because
regnancy carries with it the promise of an
ıormous life change, and whether you accept
: reject that change, it's almost impossible to
op embroidering upon it in your mind. The
notions that flowed through the waiting
ɔm at the Women's Medical Center—guilt,
ıame, resignation, embarrassment, fear, re-
et—may have been acculturations, responses
ɔ social conditioning, even indicators of a
ervasive American dishonesty about sex. But
ıat is not all they were.

Elliptical words have attached themselves to
ɔortion in the pro-choice world—"procedure,"
ɔrovider," "services"—words meant to counter
e fact that an "abortionist," a word used solely
anti-abortionists, is the only doctor who has
:en named strictly for the procedure he per-
rms. There are no appendectomists, nó chole-
stectomists. But no matter how the eu-
ıemisms multiply, the word—"abortion"—re-
ains, with emotional implications that most of
are as yet powerless to control. And in the ex-
nination rooms at the Women's Medical Cen-
r, small, quiet chambers decorated with birds
ı the ceiling and filled with aquatic, almost as-
ıl music played at low volume, abortions were
:ing performed, every half hour or so, on
ɔmen who were typically eight weeks pregnant.

Call the patient Chloe. She had already been
iefed on the medical procedure by Verna Hill.
hloe's abortion lasted only slightly longer
an the time it takes to read this transcript of
In Karlin's voice, from time to time, you can
ar Jerome Avenue. In the voices of Diane,
ıe of Karlin's assistants, and Chloe, you can
ar central Wisconsin.

LIZ KARLIN: What are you using now for birth
ntrol?

CHLOE: I wasn't using any.

LIZ: Have you been on the pill before?

CHLOE: Yes.

LIZ: And was there a problem with it?

CHLOE: No. I ran out and then I never refilled

LIZ: Okay. Stay on the pill until you want a
ild or you hit menopause. [*Laughter*] Whatev-
comes first. If you're tempted to go off, give
a call. We'll act like your sponsors and give
u a pep talk. What we find is that women
n't get pregnant on the pill but we do get
pregnant when we go off. So I just want you to try staying on it. You gonna?

CHLOE: Yeah.

LIZ: Good. Okay, this is five minutes. It's crampy, you won't love it, but most of it is just annoying. Shall we get it over with?

CHLOE: Yeah.

LIZ: You wearing a T-shirt under, this is a *gorgeous* sweater.

CHLOE: Yes.

LIZ: Take the sweater off, and the pants, underpants, and shoes off, sit your bare butt here, cover your lap with this elegant piece of paper, and we'll be right back. [*Interlude: music, sounds of clothing and paper rustling*] First, we need you in our most favorite position in the world. Don't we love this position?

DIANE: Okay, slide all the way down to the edge of the table, right to the bottom here. Keep coming. Okay, you can lie back. Slide down a couple more inches. Pull your shirt up a little bit there so the iodine . . .

LIZ: I'm a madwoman with the iodine. If you concentrate on gentle slow breaths, you'll feel better. There's no magic in it. It's just that there are two things we do when we're nervous. One is to breathe like this [*rapid, shallow panting*], then we feel sick. The other is to hold our breath, then we feel sick. So if you just do the slow breathing, you'll feel better. Diane's going to be back here to hold your hand in a second and work with you on your breathing. She's just helping me set up. I will never touch you without telling you what I'm doing. If you put your legs way out to the side, it stretches the vagina and makes this a little less awful—never good, but less awful. [*She begins her examination*] I'm going down the rectal wall. There's the cervix right there. I'm giving you a guided tour once I'm in there. And here's your uterus right here in the middle.

DIANE: Have you been nauseated much?

CHLOE: Um, I've felt a little sick.

DIANE: That'll go away today. No more. No gum in your mouth?

CHLOE: No.

LIZ: I'm gonna wipe this extra gunk [lubricant] off you here. And I'm gonna put the speculum in so I can see.

DIANE: Now, if you'll work on slow breathing here during the procedure, concentrate on doing that, it'll keep all the muscles from tensing up as much. [*Sound of deep breaths*]

LIZ: It doesn't feel great to have that speculum in. Next thing I'm gonna do is wash with iodine. So if you drip brown I did this to you.

DIANE: Breathe in, hold it for a second, then breathe out slowly.

LIZ: Great. Next thing I'm gonna do is numb up. These are the shots. You're gonna hate 'em.

Deep breath in, sharp poke, don't move.

DIANE: Hold it, hold it. [*Referring to breath*]

LIZ: Great. That was the first, there are gonna be a couple more, but we're gonna be done with these in about twenty seconds.

DIANE: Breathe in . . . and breathe out. Breathe all the way out, try not to arch your neck.

LIZ: You're doing a great job! That's the last one. Great! Those are done. Ahhh. She did it!

DIANE: Were you worried about those?

LIZ: I'm just going to put a gauze pad in to support the instrument that's there. Now I'm not going to touch you for a couple minutes while this stuff settles in like in the dentist's office, okay? It may whoosh once around your body, make you feel quite dizzy, nauseated, numb mouth, ringing in the ears. If you get those feelings they'll go away by themselves in about ninety seconds. Don't be frightened.

DIANE: Comes real quick.

LIZ: Well, for a lot of people those shots are the worst part of the whole procedure.

DIANE: Did you feel 'em all?

CHLOE: No, not really.

LIZ: You never know, some of them are just worse, I don't know why.

DIANE: So how many people do we have? [*Referring to protesters*]

LIZ: Three people outside.

DIANE: Regulars?

LIZ: Were there any people outside when you came?

CHLOE: No, there weren't.

LIZ: No, me either. They're sleeping in. We just can't get good help these days—I'm gonna wipe some of these iodine drips off your backside. I'll take this gauze pad out. Can we put the table up? I'm gonna change your position, and this is so that I—you don't have to get up, I'm gonna lift your backside a little bit—and that's so I can see better. It's a weird position, but it's actually easier on your hips. You may feel a couple cramps now, you may not. I've started the dilating, it's going extremely smoothly.

DIANE: They come and go here, the cramps.

LIZ: Last stretch coming now. [*Sound of instrument being prepared, paper and sterile plastic being removed*] You may feel one little cramp now. The machine makes a horrendously loud noise. What you'll feel is a lot of tugging and pulling. The uterus will cramp when it's empty. Cramps now don't mean there's anything wrong, it means we're at the end. Okay? We'll be done in a minute. [*Machine noise. A low vibration, like an air compressor, with the occasional sound of air being sucked through a tube*] This tugging is weird, I know, but you're doing just fine. We're just about done here. The uterus is clamping down now because it feels itself empty.

DIANE: Cramp much with periods?

CHLOE: Yeah, I do.

DIANE: But not on the pill, right?

CHLOE: No.

LIZ: I'm just gonna check the walls of th uterus to make sure they're completely empty This may cramp a little bit harder for a second One short suction and we're done. Fifty seconds, you're done. You did a wonderful job.

DIANE: You want to see? What the tissu looks like at this stage?

LIZ: What there is at your stage of pregnanc is some white placenta-like tissue, about a littl bigger than a quarter. There would not be a fe tus there for another couple of weeks. Some times it helps to see. Let me have you pus yourself way back. Just push with your feet We're not gonna make you do anything. Just g way back. Keep your feet in the stirrups for second. How you doing?

CHLOE: Great.

LIZ: The reason it helps to see is that whe we get pregnant, we develop a relationship wit something called a baby, up here, no matte how early it is. That's not what's in your uteru yet, and so it may help to see. We're not gonn force you. You did a great job. We'll get you u in a few minutes and get you to a more comfort able room. And it's *over*.

But unlike Chloe I did want to see. When I came into the examination room Chloe had gone to the recovery lounge and Diane and Liz Karlin were contemplating the bottom of a perforated, stainless-steel tray. Chloe had been seven weeks pregnant, but since pregnancies are dated from a woman's last period, she had been five weeks gestational. I looked into the tray. I could find no pronoun to help me. In the tray there lay no "he" or "she," of course. But there was no "it" lying in the tray either. What there was was a tiny quantity of bright blood streaking an uncongealed white membrane—scarcely consistent enough to *be* a membrane—with no discernible shape whatsoever. Liz Karlin knew the right pronoun: "this." "This is the unborn child, as they call it outside," she said. "That's what this fuss is all about."

A little while later, Diane stopped me in the hall and said, "Would you like to see the tissue from a more advanced pregnancy?" In the examination room she held the tray under the light. "The woman was twelve weeks pregnant, which means that this is ten weeks gestation," Diane said. Again, I contemplated the surface of a perforated stainless-steel tray. There was more bright blood, a more congealed membrane. But there was also evidence of an organic structure that had been broken apart by the force of the

ıction emptying the uterus. Amid this minute rotean mass, there was a discernible foot and a and closed in a fist, with a pallor so extreme ıat it looked like a conglomeration of white ood cells. But it was, in fact, a hand. As large what? As large as that question mark.

In that instant, I felt a profound and unmis-kable kinship with the shape implied by the ot and hand in the tray, a kinship so strong ıat it was like the rolling of the sea under my et. I felt deeply unsettled, not by the sight of ood or tissue or by Diane's matter-of-factness, hich was quite gentle, but by the act of recog-ıtion. I was surprised by my own sadness, by ıe sense of loss I felt. Strangely, I couldn't tell hat I was sad for, but I suspect that I was sad r myself, pathetic as that sounds, as though I ere somehow looking at a homuncular version myself scattered in that basin. I didn't want be shocked by what I was seeing. I wanted it be easy, and when it was not I understood hy Chloe had chosen not to see, why she had one to the recovery lounge hoping only to find ıere the face of her mother, who had brought er to the clinic. But I wanted to see and to ac-ept the punishment, the knowledge that came ith seeing. There was also consolation in what had to witness. The consolation came from alizing that the power of what I was feeling dn't invalidate what I believed, although it ontradicted it. I had been afraid of what I ould see, and now I was not. I understood its ıplications. All this took only an instant.

And in another instant that feeling of kinship as replaced by a visceral understanding of the ıormous symbolic power of the human form. I alized that it's impossible to see the human rm, no matter how minuscule or vestigial or ıgmented, without seeing also the whole curve human time, the trajectory of an entire life, ithout seeing also an autonomy that is only po-ntial, utterly contingent in a fetus or an em-yo, but that seems, because of the familiarity the form itself, already fulfilled. To look from e hand in the tray to the hand holding the ay was the work of an immeasurably small mo-ent, and to imagine the one growing into the her took no longer. If you're honest with your-lf, you'll probably find that when you read the ord "hand" in the previous paragraphs, it was ıpossible to put the size of your own hand out mind. That is because there is something in-rently proleptic about the human shape, a olepsis that is the anti-abortion movement's eatest weapon in this emotional battle.

If I felt implicated by what I saw in the exami-tion room at the Women's Medical Center, it ıs because I found it so much easier to be oved by "this," by the sight of a disembodied nd the size of a question mark gleaming under fluorescent lights, than it was to be moved by the woman from whom it had come, who was without work, without money, without education, without birth control, whose boyfriend had paid for half of her abortion, who was still learning, as Liz Karlin would have put it, to take care of herself, and who might never be able to do a better job of it than she had been doing that morning, which was pretty well, after all. I saw that there is a delusional quality to innocence, that detecting innocence is one way the powerful go about measuring their power. It didn't matter whether I believed that a child is born a tabula rasa or born with a bundle of behavioral predispositions; nor did it matter whether I saw in a fertilized egg a divine spark or a genetic engine beginning to decode, and be decoded by, its environment. In that tiny, naked hand there was the imputation of innocence. But to impute innocence to it was already a projection upon it, and the idea of innocence itself merely allowed anyone to project whatever he or she wished onto that form.

Yet onto the woman whose body that fragment of flesh had been part of, I could project almost nothing, and that is one important meaning of human autonomy. I had been drawn almost without thinking into a feeling of kinship with an implication, a hint of human life, but I would be able to come to kinship with that unnamed young woman only through an effort of will and knowledge and empathy. There was no point comparing her innocence with the innocence I had instinctively attributed to the question mark in the tray—innocence was not the point. It was not up to me to judge her innocence or her guilt, which would be, in effect, to measure my own power. It was up to me merely to try to value, to esteem what was actual in her, in what she had done for herself, in what life had carried down to her. Standing in that examination room, I could not help thinking of the two women in my own life who have had abortions, women I had loved and made pregnant. What I mourned was not the potential lost on the examination table but the actuality of the women themselves, which had been lost to me as well, and which, perhaps, I had never really known.

I felt a profound and unmistakable kinship with the foot and hand in the tray, a kinship so strong it was like the rolling of the sea under my feet

Often since that day I have woken up in the early morning, before sunrise, a time when all the extended relations of the self seem to be gathered close, and I have found myself unable to imagine how it's possible for anyone to presume to control the biological activity, the autonomous body, of another person against that person's will. I can think of no right, no logic, no leap of faith to justify it, so strongly has the autonomy of my physical being appeared to me at those times, so natural has the principle of privacy, on which *Roe* v. *Wade* is founded, seemed to me. How much more profound, then, must that feeling be for a woman. Of all the fears that the anti-abortion movement provokes, this is possibly the worst—the sense that someone else believes he has the right to control your body, to force the alienation of your own womb.

There is a cartoon that perfectly dramatizes that alienation. It appeared in the October 1993 issue of *Life Advocate*, an extremist anti-abortion magazine published by Advocates for Life Ministries. It shows a side view, from knee to shoulder, of a pregnant woman lying on an examination table. Through a cutaway view, the reader looks into her womb. There, a baby stands, holding a smoking revolver, which is pointed down the woman's vagina. Outside, a voice is saying, "It all happened so fast, Officer! Dr. Smith was inserting the suction tube when we all heard a loud shot! Then Dr. Smith was on the floor, dead!" In the womb, the child, who has no umbilical cord, is saying to itself, "I suppose people are gonna think I'm an irrational psychotic now!" So much is expressed here: the notion that a fetus is a fully developed child capable of purposive action and adult thought, the notion that it has a will and legal rights independent of its mother's, the notion that murdering a doctor is merely a form of self-defense, even the assertion of the fetus's right to own a handgun—not to mention the peculiar sexual inversions implicit in the idea that a child, presumably male, has fired a pistol at the outer world through his mother's vagina. But what is really important in this cartoon is that the pregnant woman has been turned into a headless, hollow torso.

Even from the duck blind at the Brown Deer clinic the day is perfectly flush, the November light full and cold. The three or four men and women standing out on the sidewalk have scarcely moved, though they have been joined by others, some animated, some not. One of the most vehement, strangely, is a partner in the law firm that represents Paul Seamars. Several are saying Hail Mary's and several are indulging in imprecatory prayer—praying for God to curse Seamars. Someone has put up a sequence of signs—Burma-Shave fashion—on the grass along the sidewalk, signs that say THANK GOD/DR. SEAMARS/COULDN'T GET/TO JOSEPH AND MARY/HAPPY THANKSGIVING. On the east side of the parking-lot entrance, a Milwaukee firefighter named Stephen Gaenslen has erected a particularly elaborate sign. It is made out of tubular metal, and it forms an arch wide enough to span the sidewalk and high enough for a person to walk beneath it. The words NAZI DEATH CAMP arc across the top of the sign, and above them there is a swastika.

But the real action today is at Summit Women's Health Organization, on Water Street in downtown Milwaukee. There has been what members of the MCPC call a "kiddie hit," a clinic blockade by children. Downtown Milwaukee is usually empty on a Saturday morning. Everyone is in Brown Deer country. In other parts of the city, it's easy to forget that Milwaukee lies on Lake Michigan. But driving north into the city on the elevated freeway from the airport, you pass marinas incongruously interlaced with factories and mills to the east along the lake; to the west an almost impossible number of spires rise from basilicas and cathedrals and churches above the distinctively tawny expanse of the city's older neighborhoods. Downtown begins at what was once the confluence but is now the intersection of the Menomenee and Milwaukee rivers. Water Street parallels the Milwaukee River, and when the wind is up, as it is today, it's one of the coldest spots in the whole city. Today on Water Street the temperature will rise to perhaps thirty-five in a car parked in the sun.

The Summit Women's Health Organization occupies the second floor of an old stone-and-brick building in a long block of urban buildings fronting a narrow sidewalk. Instead of a contiguous parking lot there's an open parking structure, illuminated by sodium lamps, across the street, and anti-abortionists are patrolling the front of it. Behind the clinic several more anti-abortionists have stationed themselves, including a suspected Lamb of Christ in a green parka, who may have been left behind when the Lambs departed Milwaukee earlier in the week. Nearby stands a sullen white supremacist named Riley Hood who is dressed in black and wears a cryptic button that says CHRIST DIED TO SAVE PAGANS. They have pushed a Dumpster across the rear door of the clinic.

Across the front door, sitting on the stone stoop with arms linked, there are eight adolescents, ranging in age from perhaps eleven to eighteen, among them Stephen Rella, who is the son of a named defendant, and the children

of Matt Trewhella and Joseph Foreman, the ounders of Missionaries to the Preborn. Some of these children have been arrested hundreds of times for blocking clinic entrances, and at east one of them was part of the early-morning blockade at Paul Seamars's house in October. They are dressed for autumn, in light coats and hort, inadequate ski jackets. They have no loves or mittens. The boys wear baseball caps; he girls are bareheaded. Some of these eenagers are just at the age where their own exuality is unfurling, and one or two of the oys and girls show it—they would not look ut of place at a prom or, later, in the waiting oom of an abortion clinic, whose services, as aul Seamars and Liz Karlin will attest, anti-bortion extremists do make use of from time o time. These kids have a faraway look, not he blinkered intensity of their elders. Sometimes they glance at one another, but they do ot talk.

It is, at best, an ironic situation. Catey oyle, along with Joan Clark and Katrina lass, the other MCPC organizers, greet the hildren by name. The children, naturally, eem dwarfed by the cheerful adults standing round them. When a patient shows up, she alks briskly across the street, surrounded by a ircle of green-bibbed clinic escorts and accost-d in turn by a circle of adult anti-abortionists outing, "Don't let them take the life of your hild. This is a mistake you'll have to live with ne rest of your life. It will haunt you. It will aunt you the rest of your life. They're baby utchers." When she reaches the front door, ne is lifted up by escorts, over the heads of the lockaders, and sheltered by still more escorts s she enters the clinic. "She has to go through ll that," says Joan Clark. "And *then* she gets to ave an abortion."

Across the street stand five adults. Among nem is Cynthia Hummitzsch, the school administrator, and Linda Lecher, who has just pent a night in jail and paid a fine for violating ne city and state injunction. She looks—how se is there to put it?—ordinary, the kind of oman you might find walking through a grocery store late on a Wednesday afternoon. Ordinary, that is, until I see the manic energy with hich she accosts patients, the way she hurries erself back and forth along the sidewalk as if it ere a bed of coals. I walk over to her, say hello, ll her that I'm writing about abortion in Milaukee, and ask her where she's from. "Florida," e says. As I begin to ask my next question, she ys, "I don't want to answer your questions. hat man will talk to you." She points at ichael Skott. Among members of the MCPC, cott has the reputation of being one of the ief strategists of Milwaukee's fundamentalist anti-abortion campaign.

Skott will not talk to me either, except to ask for my card and to give me the name of his church—the Gospel of Grace—and to deny that there's any such thing as an anti-abortion strategy. But standing in his presence is instructive. I don't have the easy habitude of Joan Clark or Catey Doyle or Katrina Hass, who have spent so much time rubbing shoulders with their enemies that they're almost apologetic about what they've come to take for granted. Skott is strongly built with a gaunt face and deeply set, dismissive eyes, and I feel intimidated by the distance between us, by the absence of any protocol that would allow us to blunder toward a conversation. Skott has unrolled a laminated sign. It shows in color the head of an aborted fetus—advanced far, far beyond the fetal tissue I saw in Madison—suspended in a pair of tongs above an oversized petri dish. The head is missing its jaw, which has been broken off, presumably, during the abortion. It's a grisly sight, like so many of the signs anti-abortionists carry. But there's something oddly ambiguous about its implication. What it depicts is not a child or a baby, but something you would never choose to rescue, something that should never have been conceived in the first place. The sign seems to demonstrate, if anything, how utterly a fetus, even at this advanced stage, lacks vital autonomy. The sign is an allegation, and it's a threat.

> Of all the fears that the anti-abortion movement provokes, the worst is the sense that someone else believes he has the right to control your body

After half an hour, a paddy wagon appears, and a police officer wearing a short black leather jacket says to the children, "Okay, for any of you listening, I'm Sergeant Kulmann, Milwaukee Police Department. Anybody that wants to get up and walk away from the door now will be allowed to do so."

"They kill children here," a girl says.

"If you don't get up and walk away now," Kulmann says, "you're gonna go to jail."

"We can't get up and walk away from a place where they kill children," a different girl says. Then there's the zipping sound of plastic hand restraints being prepared. One by one the children go slack, have their hands bound loosely behind them, and are lifted into the paddy wagon.

At the curfew hour they will be ticketed and released into the custody of the lone adult who comes with a van to pick them up.

By eleven, all the patients and the doctor have entered the clinic. The clinic defenders disperse, and so do the anti-abortionists. The Dumpster has been rolled away from the back door. The street is empty, except for the wind, which is no warmer now than it was several hours ago. Nothing has happened here. That is what it looks like. There's not a trace of contention or bitterness left in sight. It's hard to believe that what took place here this morning echoes all the way to the recondite chambers of the Supreme Court, and it's hard to remember that very little happened here after all only because invisible lines of force have been drawn by city, state, and federal courts. I recalled something a friend said when I showed her the videotape of the predawn blockade at Paul Seamars's house. "Is there ever any violence?" she asked. But intimidation is violence.

There is a tendency in the United States to admire strength of belief as a positive value in itself, without considering the content of belief

The newest target of anti-abortion protest in Milwaukee is Fredrik Broekhuizen, an obstetrician and gynecologist and chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Wisconsin Medical School's Milwaukee campus. Five months after I first came to Milwaukee, I went to see Broekhuizen in his office at Sinai Samaritan Medical Center, an imposing hospital on Kilbourn Avenue, not far from downtown Milwaukee. Among many other procedures, Broekhuizen also provides what he calls terminations for fetal anomalies and medically indicated terminations through the second trimester of pregnancy. He is a handsome, youthful man, and he speaks—in a pronounced Dutch accent—thoughtfully and protectively of his practice. Like many ob/gyn specialists, he regularly confronts the philosophical dilemmas surrounding high-risk pregnancies, pregnancies that are often, as he says, incompatible with life. "How far do you go in trying to save the smallest of premature babies?" he asked. "Because that's of course the paradox, that on any given day here we might terminate a pregnancy close to twenty four weeks for a lethal anomaly, but at twenty-two weeks, which is still within the legal limit,* we now have technology to really go all out and try to create survivors."

Broekhuizen explained that in January 1994 the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists passed a recommendation that "encourages programs to train physicians and other licensed health care professionals to provide abortion services in collaborative settings." But, said Broekhuizen, "the protest and some of the violence that surrounds [abortion] is actually a barrier to implementing it. How many ob/gyns in this country are willing to provide abortion services and are capable of teaching? There has been an enormous erosion. If anything has happened over the last ten, fifteen years, [it] is that because of the intimidation and harassment and other factors, the majority of people in [the ob/gyn] community have decided that the price they had to pay for even providing part-time services was too high. So they have withdrawn from it." In 1991, only 12.4 percent of ob/gyn residency programs offered routine training in first-trimester abortion procedures (56.4 percent offered optional training), and only 6.7 percent offered routine training in second-trimester abortion procedures (58.7 percent offered optional training). These numbers are down from 22.6 percent for first-trimester training in 1985 and 20.6 percent for second-trimester training.

To laypersons, it looks as though doctors entering ob/gyn practice can choose freely whether to provide abortions. But since very few of them accept the rigors of solo practice, their decision about providing abortion services is determined by the policies of the HMO or group practice they join, policies that are often shaped by a desire to avoid acrimonious protest. "A lot of options aren't open to you," Paul Seamars told me. "If I wanted to join a group practice here in Milwaukee, in the contract it'll say you will not provide abortion services. They don't want the people out front. So basically you're limited to going into solo practice."

Even when policies are liberal, as they are at Sinai Samaritan, there's still a price to pay. "See, in a sense I feel I'm more vulnerable," Broekhuizen said, referring to individual practices like Seamars's and Liz Karlin's. "The economic effect of successful intimidation and harassment for a multispecialty clinic or a hospital is potentially more rewarding. Because if you can create an embattled environment around a hospital, it is the patients of cardiologists and everybody else who say, 'Well, gee, I'll have my

*In Roe v. Wade, *the Supreme Court set a twenty-four-week limit for elective abortions.*

ɔen-heart surgery down at that other hospital ·cause I don't want to walk through that.' . . . n the chairman of an ob/gyn department and ɛ want infertility services to grow, I want gh-risk-pregnancy services to grow. If I were have a routine abortion service, I know that ery other element of those programs would ffer in competition with other hospitals, be- use effectively there would be protesters every y and we would plainly lose business."

But among doctors the issue of abortion is ɔt just one of access to training or choice of actice or the potential cost to institutions, pa- :nts, or even themselves. It's also a matter of cial status and the lingering calumny that still ıanates from that older, pre-1973 landscape abortion, where the abortion doctor is a rene- de, "a filthy guy," in Liz Karlin's words, oper- ng in a back-alley apartment where the only ɔtesters are the police who come to shut him wn. Doctors, no less than their patients, are sceptible to the workings of myth and the ·ce of social approval, something that Mark ·utcher, a radical anti-abortionist, stated ɛmorably in his incendiary tract *Firestorm: A uerrilla Strategy for a Pro-Life America.** "There a tremendous difference," Crutcher writes, etween what doctors think about abortion, d what they think about abortionists."

That is Liz Karlin's conclusion, too. In 1993, ɔostcard was mailed throughout Madison with r photograph on it and the words FOR YOUR ·ORMATION . . . ELIZABETH KARLIN [and here the card appeared both her home and office dresses] IS AN ABORTIONIST. "The president- ct of the American Medical Women's Asso- tion wrote letters," Karlin told me, "to the ans of the two medical schools in Wisconsin, ·ing, 'One of the doctors is being treated orly because of a legal medical procedure. hat are you doing?' They said, 'We don't ve to [do anything].' It never occurred to ɛm that something very bad was happening d they were folding. I got a visceral reaction: ay, now I know how Hitler did it, how you solutely paralyze a thinking society. I saw ɛse thugs coming in and frightening a med- l school. This medical establishment, no tter what they say, would have to believe at women who have abortions are a little ıda dirty, a little kinda whorish; otherwise ·y wouldn't be able to fold."

After I interviewed Fredrik Broekhuizen that urday last March, I took a drive out to the ɛthern suburbs, along Brown Deer Road, and pped at 8634 to leave a message for Dr. Sea- rs. There was no one protesting in the park- ing lot, along the sidewalk, or on the grass that borders the highway. As I walked toward the clinic entrance, I realized that over time I had come to regard that parking lot not as a blank, oil-stained pavement but as "a zone where women are protected," as Joan Clark had put it, an open space where women seeking abortions could exercise their legal right by gaining access to the Wisconsin Women's Health Care Center. I realized that this hideous expanse of asphalt had become an American agora, the arena for something that was not debate yet was often passed off under that name. This was where the legislation, the insurance regulations, the criminal code, the political speeches, the health-care proposals were being written.

The day before, I had spent a good part of the afternoon in Catey Doyle's office, high above Milwaukee, looking out over City Hall. We had a long, slightly melancholy talk, our mood perhaps the result of fatigue and a sense of closure. The conversation wandered, but inevitably it came back to the issue of abortion.

"I am tired of it, quite honestly," said Doyle. "I really have had it with it. I have the lingering honor of having filed a lawsuit against WVCY and other defendants because they accused me of kicking a kid in the face, and they just kept broadcasting it and broadcasting it. They wouldn't stop and they wouldn't retract it, and so I finally just decided—it was a really difficult decision—I finally decided I would sue them, because I feel I'm strong enough to handle that."

We began to talk too about the fervor of antiwar protest in the Vietnam era and the peculiar seductions of political campaigning, the feeling of belonging to a movement. And then Doyle said, "There's something in me, I realize lately, [that] I really long for in a way. It's to—I've never said this out loud—to be involved in some kind of a movement that just takes over your life, sweeps you up, gives you a focus, gives you more than focus, but gives you a focus from which you make judgments about everything else in the world. There's a really nice feeling about being caught up in something like that and knowing, for example, that you can just talk to people and they'll understand completely everything you're talking about. And I can see how it's sort of seductive to these people, that it must be hard to give up, especially in this anti-abortion movement, where they go from city to city. It must be very hard to stop."

The tone with which Doyle said this—almost wistful but not completely forsaking irony—helped me understand something I had been groping toward, ever since I first drove into the parking lot at the Brown Deer clinic. There is a tendency in the United States to ad-

litors' Note: An excerpt from a manual used by ex- ne anti-abortionists appears in Readings, on page 19.

mire strength of belief as a positive value in itself, without considering the content of belief. It isn't what you believe, after all, but the fervor with which you believe it that "gives you a focus," as Doyle put it, "from which you make judgments about everything else in the world." In some unqualified intensity of conviction, some suicidally selfless faith, lies the widespread American fascination with someone like David Koresh and the final days at Waco or with Jim Jones and the mass suicide in Guyana. It is what caused Catey Doyle to say to me, "Sometimes I even look at these anti-abortion protesters, and they've got something I don't have." Almost everyone has felt that way at one time or another, felt that it would be easier to have all your questions answered for you, to have everything explained, to have a source of authority that would settle everything.

Things were relatively quiet in Milwaukee until June 4, 1994, a Saturday. That morning, outside a clinic called Affiliated Medical Health Services, there occurred what Joan Clark called "a full lock and block," the first test in the nation of the new federal FACE Act, which had been signed by President Clinton only two weeks earlier. At 5:30 A.M., five men, one women, and one juvenile girl, members of Missionaries to the Preborn, Operation Rescue, CALL, and the Lambs of Christ, drove up to the clinic entrance in two specially modified automobiles. Their doors were welded shut, and a cage had been welded in place over the windows. Through a hole cut in the floorboard, the drivers slid onto the ground and shackled themselves in place, preventing the cars from being towed away. Using a complicated arrangement of seat belts, one man shackled himself to the engine and frame of one of the cars. At 8:30, an Affiliated administrator opened the fire door on the side of the building and admitted the day's patients and the physician. On September 29, 1994, a similar lock and block was staged at the Brown Deer clinic. But this time, the anti-abortionists locked themselves to the vehicles by placing modified Kryptonite bike locks around their necks. Among the participants in this lock and block was Michael Skott.

As these blockades demonstrate, there was until recently something almost haphazard, almost incoherent—and therefore politically and strategically ineffectual—about the links among anti-abortion extremists. But that has begun to change, and the change, like the murder of Dr. Britton and his escort and the attempted murder of a Vancouver gynecologist last November, brings with it an air of dire foreboding in the pro-choice community. Much of the organizational energy of Milwaukee's anti-abortion extremists has now been directed to a radical political party called the U.S. Taxpayers Party, based in Vienna, Virginia, which is beginning to field candidates in local elections. (Randall Terry, the head of Operation Rescue, is among those hoping to run on the USTP ticket in 1996.) At the Wisconsin state convention of the USTP in May, where copies of a field manual for fundamentalist militias were distributed to the crowd, Matt Trewhella urged churches to sponsor what he called "militia days," as his own Mercy Seat Christian Church has done. He urged members of the audience, which had cheered calls for the criminalization of homosexuality and the murder of abortion providers, to buy "SKS rifles and five hundred rounds of ammunition" for each of their children for Christmas. Trewhella reportedly has already taught his infant son which finger is his trigger finger.

Since I was last in Milwaukee, every week seems to have brought some news about the battle over abortion rights, and whenever I come upon that news I remember not Paul Seamars or Liz Karlin or even the woman I have called Chloe. I remember the parking lot in front of the Brown Deer clinic. The battle over the parking lot is a battle to protect an open space and abortion is only the pretext. It could be homosexuality or gun control or some aspect of the environmental movement or an issue of race or education. On one side of the fence, holding signs and swastikas and muttering imprecatory prayers, there is a group of men and women who will answer all of life's questions for you. They will tell you exactly what to believe and how to act, once you have chosen them or enabled them to choose you. And on this side of the fence—right up against the fence, holding the others at bay—there is a group of men and women who do not pretend to have any answers. Their job is to make it possible for you to enter the parking lot, but they will not tell you what to do when you get there. You can keep walking toward the clinic entrance. You can stop and pray. You can get in your car and drive home. You can go up to the man who is holding the sign that says I WILL ADOPT YOUR BABY and ask him how he knows whether Jesus disapproves of abortion or of birth control, or of homosexuality. No one in the parking lot pretends that having to make your own decisions is a source of relief. But the relief of having someone else make them for you vanishes quickly, leaving the taste of ashes in your mouth.

BRIGHTNESS VISIBLE

On learning to see the gravity of bears and the wonder of beetles

By Edward Hoagland

A bristly, lovely, although hot and fearsome recklessness invigorates God in the Old Testament when he loses patience. *Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee,* he says to Job, who has been complaining of his unjust sufferings. But justice is not what the majesty of Creation is all about. Consider, for instance, the hippopotamus. *He moveth his tail like a cedar . . . his bones are like bars of iron . . .*

For me too religion needs to wear a mask of jubilation. Yet unmixed glee is beyond my capacities. I begin to flag if I am required to be upbeat for many hours at a stretch—though I have in fact had just the sort of biblical experience that warrants a lifelong commitment to the happy tangents of faith. It happened during my late fifties, when two eye operations restored my sight after two or three years of legal blindness. My vision had shrunk to the point where I couldn't see faces, birds, or trees. Through my telescope I studied the rising moon or the way that branches interlaced, but even the lenses of such an instrument could barely recapitulate what my eyes with ordinary eyeglasses had formerly seen.

Quite suddenly, however, within a period of half a dozen weeks, the miracle of the streaming clouds, the blowing grass, the leaping birds, the upspread trees, and the variety of expressions on my friends' faces was given back to me. For possibly an entire year, in the exalting aftermath of regaining my eyesight, I was incapable of being depressed—I simply needed to glance out the window. I couldn't believe how golden the sunshine was, how softly green each leaf, or how radiant the city night could be, with its great arc-like sparkling bridges and hooded mobs of apartment houses, each of the thousands of lives packed inside signified by a small

Edward Hoagland's most recent book is Balancing Acts, *a collection of essays. His last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"To the Point," appeared in the March 1993 issue.*

I WAS SADLY STARTLED, IN THE MIDST OF MY EXUBERANCE, TO NOTICE HOW MANY OF MY FRIENDS' FACES HAD CHANGED DURING MY BLIND YEARS

yellow light. If I was in the city, the slant of lion-skinned building ston on a skyscraper's face was breathtaking. In the country, I was lifted to rap ture by the prismatic pointillism of the wildflowers, or a sea of seed head shimmering underneath the black outcrops on a mountainside, the puc and pink of a slow dawn, the white slats of birch bark under a purple rain storm medallioned by a rainbow or slashed by a crimson shaft of half-se sun, a sky big enough to fall right into forever and ever if I lay on m back and didn't grip the grass.

And, of course, I didn't neglect to look up Christ's miracle-workin episodes, impromptu as they were. Set against the scale of eternal redemp tion, the temporary plight of the blind and sick whom he encountered ac cidentally was not his preoccupation. But pity for their anguish mixe with his practicality when he asked whether they "believed." Presumably since God had created heaven and earth, God could cure blindness, lep rosy, or whatnot with or without "belief," but Christ's own powers, swif and serene though they seem, may have needed that extra catalyst. In deed, in Mark 8, the act requires two applications of Christ's hands: th first only restores the blind man of Bethsaida's sight to the extent tha people look to him *like trees . . . walking about*. So *Jesus laid his hands on hi eyes again*. Rather like my surgeon.

I was truly, sadly startled, though, in the midst of my exuberance, to no tice how many of my friends' faces had changed during my blind years. The looked battered, bruised, disheartened, bereft of illusion, apprehensive, o knocked a bit awry by the very campaigns and thickets of life that I was gid dy with delight to have regained. I was seeing the forest, I decided, whil they were engrossed by the trees. Like a prisoner sprung from a dungeon, didn't care about minor harassments, frictions, frettings, inconvenience The sky, the clouds, the colors and movement, and my sudden freedom wer plenty for me. I could be irascible, impatient, and hard to get on with, bu never unhappy; that's not what life was for. Instead I was charged up, alight Lazarus-like, and I realized that such a marked alteration in my friends' face and the cast of strangers' expressions could not be the result of my havin just been "away" for a while, but that everything was clearer. The fox-re coat of a deer in June; the glow of a checkered, fat garter snake, its whit skin shining between its black scales; a goldfinch's trampoline bounce o the wing; the fire-engine pace of a chimney swift tearing around; leaf shad ows running on a tree trunk like a crowd of squirrels as the wind blew. Suc a lovely, vivid, vibrant world—what does it matter if your marriage is goin rancid? "Cheer up, for heaven's sake!" I wanted to say when the shaft of stranger's glance on the street told me a tale of misery. Funky neon at mid night in the city, or raindrops zigging down a windowpane, a sky of feathe blue, a sky of sleety pewter, a lady's dachshund walking like a leashed sala mander down the sidewalk—and the piercing pleasure of a toddler seein it—old bricks on a town house or a church front.

In Manhattan I went to services at the church where I'd been chris tened more than fifty years before, and both before and after my crucia operations I seemed so otherworldly or beamish to the vicars and the verg ers that they assumed I was one of the homeless, fiftyish men who wer mingling with the well-heeled parishioners for the sake of the sandwiche served afterward. There was no end to how glad I was at any hour to wak up, step outside, or simply pour and stir a cup of coffee an stretch my feet into the spill of zebra-patterned sunligh that the venetian slats threw on the rug so marvelously.

Behold now behemoth, God says. . . . *He lieth under the shady trees, i the covert of the reed . . . the willows of the brook compass him about. Behol he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jorda into his mouth*. Or, God continues angrily to Job, *Canst thou draw ou leviathan with an hook. . . . Canst thou put an hook into his nose? . . . Will h make many supplications unto thee? . . . Wilt thou play with him as with a bird*

I use the King James translation, and Leviathan may be either a whale
a crocodile, though this spiky, vivid description goes on to resemble in
s particulars a scaly, toothy crocodile, who, like the often dangerous
ppo, could make the Jordan River terrifying. The biblical Hebrews were
inland people, not seafarers like the Phoenicians; but on the other
and, the author of the Book of Job is considered to have been a later,
ore traveled and worldly individual than some of the other writers. The
evised English Bible of 1989 splits this chapter, 41, into two entries di-
ded by Chapter 40, so that Leviathan can represent both of these won-
ous and unconquerable creatures. And the whole glorious dithyramb to
e animal kingdom—peacocks; lions; wild, gleeful goats; formidable wild
xen; wild, nifty asses; dashing ostriches; soaring cliff-eagles—recited by
od pridefully to the much abused Job out of a "whirlwind," is in marked
ntrast to that earlier, more famous God, whose injunction to Adam
d Eve at the beginning of Genesis is that they and humankind should
bdue . . . and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the
r, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The Hebrew God is whimsical, jealous, inconsistent: mad, of course,
ry soon after that first chapter of Genesis, at Eve and Adam, with some-
hat the same tone of thunderous petulance he later directs at poor Job
r rather less reason. (Job's long sufferings have been the result of a sort of
sporting bet between God and a manipulative, teasing Satan, not an im-
lsive act of disobedience at the behest of some newly fledged Serpent.)
ven in the single book of Deuteronomy, where Moses transmits, at God's
struction in Chapter 5, the Ten Commandments (plus at different
oints a considerable amount of merciful detail as to how bond servants,
idows, orphans, and destitute wayfarers shall be
eated), God also decrees, in Chapters 2 and 3,
e genocide of the tribes of Heshbon—*the men,*
d the women, and the little ones—and also of
g—utterly destroying the men, women, and chil-
en, of every city. And again, in Chapter 20,
od ordains a further holocaust: *Thou shalt save*
ive nothing that breatheth. But thou shalt utterly
stroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amor-
s, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites,
d the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath com-
anded thee. Deuteronomy does contain the
ief, winsomely generous admonition in Chap-
r 25 that *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he*
eadeth out the corn (in other words, not let him
el hunger), but it also includes, in Chapter 28,
e dire warning that if God's established "holy
eople," the Jews, don't follow his command-
ents they will become cannibals from famine,
nquest, siege, and plague, eating their own
ildren. And in Exodus 20 and 34 the vindic-
ve threat is floated that a father's sins will be
sited upon his son even to the fourth genera-
on—although, in fairness, Deuteronomy 24, Jeremiah 30, and Ezekiel 18
ntradict this. *I wound, and I heal,* he says in Deuteronomy 32.



He seems a berserk and hideous deity in some of the more perfervid re-
arks that Moses and others record or attribute to him. He is an angry
liph who might better suit the Serbs or Hutus of 1994 or the Hitlerian
atholics of World War II, and he did not have much appeal for me as a
y, though the Old Testament stories we heard in church and Sunday
hool were riveting—the drama of baby Isaac almost being sacrificed by
s father, Abraham; of Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes; of Joseph
ld into slavery by his brothers; of little Moses in the bulrushes; of Job's
th and loss of faith; of David fighting Goliath with a slingshot; of Sam-

THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SEEMS A BERSERK AND HIDEOUS DEITY WHO MIGHT BETTER SUIT THE SERBS OR HUTUS

strations by Victoria Kann

THE SNAKE AND CROCODILE, THE ELEPHANT AND HIPPO SHOULD HAVE UNTRAMMELED TERRITORY LEFT IN WHICH TO PLAY THEIR FATEFUL, ANTIQUE ROLES

son rendered powerless when the treacherous Delilah cut off his hai (Judith a heroine but Delilah a villainess). The sheer, gala accretion c these tales, extending over a good number of centuries, had more narrativ weight than did the thirty-year story of Jesus, from Bethlehem to Calvary.

But Jesus spoke for a God whose teachings I could better swallow. His too, in its abbreviated way, is a matchless tale. Born in a manger, al though he was the Son of God, because there was no room at the inn, ye visited in his infancy by wise men and shepherds drawn by a radiant sta healing blind men and lepers, raising the dead, and throwing the mone changers out of the Temple, accompanied by a small band of "fishers c men"; betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver and crucified betwee two criminals, dying in agony and thirst after several hours but forgivin his captors, "for they know not what they do," and on the third day risin from the dead to sit at the right hand of God himself. A most direct para ble—just lengthy enough, yet coherent and confirmed by four testimoni als. You can't beat it for what it is, and the interpretations within ou own language and time have ranged from "Onward Christian Soldiers" t Martin Luther King. You see on TV the pomp of the Pope versus Mothe Teresa. And whatever these elaborations have become, the central ad denda of Christianity seem as essential to me as the Bill of Rights adde onto a basic Constitution. Judaism without the Sermon on the Moun seems a religion incomplete, *lex talionis*—an ey for an eye—without the Golden Rule: *Whatso ever ye would that men should do to you, do y even so to them* (Matthew 7).



Jesus added to the undercarriage of Judaism not to destroy *but to fulfill*, he says. And like Moses before him, he went into the wildernes on a walkabout, up to a mountaintop for revela tion—which I take to be more evidence of bibli cal ambivalence about the idea that the wilder ness ought to be bridled and ruled, that the snake and crocodile, the elephant and hippo, the whale and lion should have no untrammeled ter ritory left in which to strut their stuff and play their fateful, antique roles. Still, as against the legend of Christ, shimmering and imperishable as it is (and, indeed, priests and ministers wea desert dress), you have Judaism beginning not with a baby's birth but with the very universe You have the theater of Eve and her Serpent then Noah's brave Ark; wise Solomon; the vi sions of Isaiah; Jeremiah and Zechariah; Daniel in the Lions' Den; Jonah in the Whale; the Song of Songs; and zestfully on. No wonder so many Jews have regarded them selves as a people chosen by God.

My own bias is against a monotheism so people-centered, and thus the Old Testament God who most appeals to me is least "Hebrew." ("There is no certainty that the author was an Israelite," says Marvin Pope, a lead ing scholar on the Book of Job.) God's magnificently hair-raising answer to Job from out of the whirlwind outguns anything of the sort in the New Testament, which after all is more fit for the advent of St. Francis, lover of tiny birds, or the pacifism of Martin Luther King than for the preserva tion of old values. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* God declares (a lover of carnivorous tigers as well as small birds) . . . *when the morning stars sang together? . . . Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days? . . . Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? . . . Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? . . . Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? . . . Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . . Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of*

ew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven? . . . nowest thou the ordinances of heaven? . . . Canst thou lift up thy voice to the ouds? . . . Canst thou send lightnings? . . . Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? . . . provideth for the raven his food?

For me, that's plenty good enough as an underlying Constitution, an underpinning for my American Transcendentalism, as well as a basic link to ther world religions and beyond them to the grandfather, or "pagan," spiual impulses that occasionally well up in so many of us at the ocean, in ie woods, or during slam-crash thunderstorms or the extraordinary hallunations that afflict us when someone we love dies. Genesis's intolerance wilderness was tailor-made for the Industrial Revolution. It covered the ergy on every lame excuse given for ducking their heads as the skies and elds and rivers turned sooty-black, and breathing space and sunny light nd a whole panoply of flashing creatures disappeared. Just as on other isies such as slavery, child labor, racial prejudice, and colonial genocide, the nurch was rarely in the vanguard to intervene, but, rather, brought up the ar of the mainstream, snubbing the earnest mavericks while the situation pidly grew worse. In my lifetime alone, perhaps half the species that were ive on earth when I was born will have been snuffed out.

Christianity displays these contradictions in St. George slaying the agon while St. Francis plays with birds, in Androcles plucking a thorn om the lion's paw while St. Patrick drives the snakes out of Ireland. nd Judaism has faced its own immiscibility in the task of peacemaking Israel, where rabbis and religious folk have not seemed to play an adeiate part in whatever reconciliation has been accomplished with the alestinians. Instead, it's been mostly the work of military men and secur idealists, as if the Jewish religion itself is incomplete, a religion of restance, of "silence, exile, and cunning" (in James Joyce's analogous defition of how art should be engendered), but not yet a religion brought to osure, not yet a savior's religion here on earth.

No stretch of grief or the imagination, no precedent in science or logic n get a handle on this catastrophe—half of Creation extinguished in a ngle life span. Noah did not materialize again to save God's handiwork, even a Mother Teresa. Flying beings, swimming things, creeping, awling, running existences, long-legged or short-winged, brought to life er many, many millennia, had no escape and simply blinked out. Peoe, says a friend of mine who is a Congregational minister, "are born in lidarity with Creation but live in brokenness with Creation," or, as he lds, "in sin."

The author of the Song of Songs, another extravaganza, might testify that. You may recall some of his imagery: *Your eyes are doves behind ur veil, your hair like a flock of goats streaming down Mount Gilead. Your eth are like a flock of ewes newly shorn . . . your parted lips . . . like a pomenate cut open. . . . Your two breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a zelle grazing among the lilies.* (This from the Revised English Bible, nich is more lyric here.) *Come with me,* the speaker adds to his new ide, *from the summit of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from e lions' lairs, and the leopard-haunted hills,* to civilization. The duality of ture in the Bible is like that in other ancient epics, such as *Gilgamesh,* e *Odyssey,* or *Beowulf,* and our own literary figures, Melville, Hardy, d Conrad. Psalm 104 boasts affectionate references to wild goats and ck badgers, storks, whales that sport in the sea, wild donkeys, and ung lions *seeking their food from God.* But in Psalm 102, *I am stricken, thered like grass. . . . I am like a desert owl in the wilderness, like an owl that es among ruins,* the writer says. The King James version uses the intrigug translation "pelican," but wild places are not habitats where you'd nt to be.

And in Isaiah, Chapter 34, after the Lord has sated his bloody wrath up the residents of Edom, *horned owl and bustard will make it their home; it ll be the haunt of screech-owl and raven. . . . It will be the lair of wolves. . . .*

IN MY LIFETIME ALONE, PERHAPS HALF THE SPECIES THAT WERE ALIVE ON EARTH WHEN I WAS BORN WILL HAVE BEEN SNUFFED OUT

YOU AND I, BORN THE SAME YEAR, MAY DIE THIRTY YEARS APART. JUSTICE IS NOT GOD'S DEPARTMENT

Marmots will live alongside jackals. . . . There too the nightjar will return to rest and . . . there the sand-partridge will make her nest, lay her eggs and hatch them and gather her brood under her wings; there will the kites gather, each with its mate . . . they will occupy it for all time, and each succeeding generation will dwell there. (The King James substitutes unicorns and cormorants, bitterns, dragons, satyrs, and vultures for some of these; and the American Revised Standard Version, porcupines, ostriches, and hyenas.) Likewise, when Babylon is overthrown in Isaiah 13, *marmots will have their lairs in her, and porcupines will overrun her houses; desert-owls will dwell there, and there he-goats will gambol; jackals will occupy her mansions, and wolves her luxurious palaces.* Sounds like the epitome of desolation but also like a bit of fun. The desert fathers lived closer to nature than us.

Here, as in Job, the wilderness is presented as an alternative to cities and to agriculture, certainly not one that man wishes for, yet one that, for God's superbly diverse purposes, continues to celebrate the glory of earth. Though God had been mean to the Snake, back in Genesis, for tempting Eve (*upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed . . .*), wild animals are generally God's children, too. What he envisions for them at the end of time is summed up in Isaiah 11. *Then the wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion will feed together, with a little child to tend them. The cow and the bear will be friends . . . and the lion will eat straw like cattle. The infant will play over the cobra's hole, and the young child dance over the viper's nest. There will be neither hurt nor harm in all my holy mountain; for the land will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

No permission is given in Isaiah, Job, or Genesis for the holocaust mankind has visited upon the natural world, whereby the rhinoceros may soon be as scarce as the unicorn. Behemoths, crocodiles, and the soaring eagles and fearsome lions that enriched, mythologized, and demonized the banks of the Jordan as manifestations of God's majesty are long gone, with their like being pursued to the edge of the planet. The blackened woods, the sooty skies, "Leviathan" more than decimated: God is not just. He is cryptic, elliptical, even countenancing your death, *my* death. Like sand in a wasp-waisted egg timer, we tumble through the slot before we're quite ready to, and the tumbling process does not ensure fairness, even in priority. You and I, born the same year, may die thirty years apart. Justice is not God's department; justice is a man-made concept, except in the somewhat different sense that character is often fate, as, in fact, Job's is, finally winning him back God's favor, or, to be exact, *fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and as many she-asses,* so that he's exactly twice as rich as before God allowed Satan to toy so cruelly with him. In life we don't necessarily see people receiving their just deserts, but over a couple of decades we do notice their muddied faces and bitten nails if, although rich as Croesus, they have lived nastily. Time wounds all heels.

The Old Testament God seemed as primitive as a tribal sheik, being too much constructed in the splintered, banal image of man. Thus the New Testament, although less dramatically embellished with centuries' worth of narrative, convinced me more as a boy. I was a Tolstoyan then, and from that teenage base of idealism I discovered jubilee "shout" singing in the black Pentecostal church I used to go to in San Francisco in the late 1950s. I later discovered St. Francis's hymn of adoration called "The Canticle of the Creatures": "Most high and most holy, most powerful Lord. . . . To Thee and Thy creatures we proffer our praise:/To our brother the sun in the heavens ashine,/Who brings us the beauty and joy of our days,/Thine emblem and sign./We praise Thee, O Lord, for our sister the moon, . . ./For our brother the wind, for the bright of the noon,/For all of Thy weather./For our sister the water, so humble and chaste,/For beautiful fire, with his perilous powers,/For our mother the

rth, who holds us embraced,/Who delights us with flowers . . ."
Transcendentalism naturally followed, and I stopped describing myself as Christian. Nevertheless, Psalm 148 does say it all: *Praise the Lord from the rth, you sea monsters and ocean depths; fire and hail, snow and ice, gales of ind that obey his voice; all mountains and hills; all fruit trees and cedars; wild an- als and all cattle, creeping creatures and winged birds. . . . Praise the Lord.* And salm 150, the famous one: *Praise the Lord. Praise God in his holy place, praise n in the mighty vault of heaven. . . . Praise him with fanfares on the trumpet, praise him on harp and lyre; praise him with tambourines and dancing, praise him with flute and strings; praise him with the clash of cymbals; with triumphant cymbals praise him . . .*

"I HAVE SEEN THE ELEPHANT," THE GOLD RUSHERS AND OTHER FRONTIERSMEN USED TO SAY AFTER THEY RETURNED TO TOWN

Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee! An electrifying in- nction, and for practically a lifetime I've been doing just that—observ- g zebras, and genuine behemoths like elephants, hippos, giraffes, hales, jaguars, and grizzlies. I have believed that they were indeed nade with me," and by the age of eighteen I was already thrusting my and down a circus hippo's mouth to scratch the back of her tongue and e inside of her cheeks, much in the way that tick birds or "ox-peckers" in Africa, searching out leeches. I also communed with Siberian and matran tigers, both now almost extinct, and black-maned lions and dian elephants, and I rubbed a rhino's itchy lips on sweltering after- ons, not in a trivializing manner but single- indedly, with a passion that had begun with rtles when I was five or six—like that of city ds for dinosaurs nowadays. Leopard seals and onymous leopards, killer whales in the Arc- and Antarctic, and Nile River crocodiles: e traveled far and wide since then to glimpse ese stirring beings. *Canst thou draw out viathan with an hook? . . . Will he make many pplications unto thee?* Can you *make a ban- et of him* or *part him among the merchants?* od asks Job jeeringly, and, alas, it's come to pass that we can, with re- ligion frequently a handmaiden to the merchants.



On the street, with my rejuvenated sight $15,000 plastic implants—I seemed to see ht back into the exhaustion and poignant xiety in the recesses of other people's eyes, e thwarted potential for love and fun and dication, the foiled altruism, now in eyance, and the exasperation. And yet I ld also see the imp that lived in them, the child that hadn't died. So en the variables that exist in somebody's face, from mirth to aggrava- n, add up to the wish to still believe in virtue, hope, and God.

'I have seen the elephant," the Gold Rushers and other frontiersmen d to say after they returned to town. For me, with a lifelong belief that aven is on earth, not nebulously up in the sky, I see it every dawn and nset and in the head-high joe-pye weed, smelling like vanilla in July d used by the Indians in treating typhus, colds, chills, "sore womb af- childbirth," diarrhea, liver and kidney ailments, "painful urination," t, and rheumatism). I see it in the firmament at night and in a stand spruce or a patch of moss beside a brook. And during the time when I s blind I could smell it in the scent of a blossoming basswood tree, or r it in a toad's trill, or lay my head flat on the ground and gaze at the est of fervent moss, inches away, a beetle or a caterpillar crawling. *old now behemoth.* ■

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PRUM

A curious tale of power, prophecy, and cargo in the South Pacific

By Will Bourne

The flags go up at eight o'clock on John Prum Day, as they do every morning in the village of Ipikel. At a blast from a bamboo whistle, a color guard emerges from John Prum headquarters. On one edge of the village's central field, eight men assemble wearing tropical-weight khaki uniforms, a gift from the Swiss Navy. Across the field, near a mammoth banyan tree, four others are clad in what seem to be authentic U.S. Marine uniforms. Five flags are raised military-style on five bamboo poles: To the west, the Vanuatu national flag stands alone beside the not quite pig-proof stockade. Thirty feet from it, in a row of three, are the flag of Tafea (the local island group), the U.S. Navy flag, and Old Glory. To the east, a few yards from where I stand, the foursome hoists the official red banner of the United States Marine Corps.



Unlike every other day in Ipikel, however, today the pageant continues: A double file of barefoot troops enter from beyond the village gate. They carry four-foot lengths of bamboo at the "shoulder arms" position, the tops cut to a bayonet point and colored red to evoke fire. Across their bare chests "U.S.A." is lettered in red paint. There is no smiling, only the sound of orders gruffly given, of hands slapping the smooth stocks of the bamboo rifles and feet beating the pig-trui fled ground. A secon platoon drills in ar klets of dried seed with twists of fres grass in their hai their chests painte with medals, thei backs with lines de noting the folds of uniform shirt and th shoulder braids of pa rade dress. The scen is traversed here an there by bush dogs an the odd chicken. A man standing to m left gargles stage direc tions into a bullhorn The crowd of mor than two thousan onlookers, some o whom have walked all night fro the farthest reaches of the island, i absolutely silent.

John Prum Day falls on Februar 15, known fondly here as "Namba 15"; today is the thirty-seventh an nual. The location is an obscur apostrophe of rock called Tanna part of Vanuatu, an island nation i the South Pacific that lies betwee Fiji and New Caledonia. Ipikel Tanna's largest village, is a place where little boys in ratty shorts pa

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Photograph by Kal Muller / Woodfin Camp

ol the bush with bows and arrows, oking for birds; where the only esh water for 550 people comes om a hole scooped from the red id black rocks at the edge of Sul-ur Bay; where medicine means lling incisions with leaves and nding them with vines; where ere is no glass to speak of and no etal apart from a few sheets of cor-gated tin and the steel blades of ish knives. This is a place without oney, without hunger, without ork beyond a little casual cultiva-on; a place where the guava and e coconut fall ripe into the out-etched hand.

Most people on earth have never ard of the John Prum Movement. it to the citizens of Ipikel—and to few thousand of Tanna's twenty-o thousand other residents—John um is a messiah. He is a redeemer o speaks all languages and travels and from America through Yasur, e volcano that rumbles and erupts nstantly above this fan-shaped lley and is considered the source everything in it: pigs, breadfruit, nguage, ocean. Who John was—d whether he ever walked the rth under this or any other name no one can say. That he exists is deniable.

The John Prum Movement be-ngs to the family of cargo cults, ange religious hybrids that result nen the baubles of industry are pped into a place that has never countered them before. The best-own examples come from the uth Pacific at the time of the Sec-d World War. As Douglas acArthur pincered his way up to-rd the Japanese, he leapfrogged oss islands that had scarcely seen iece of steel, let alone vast, float-g villages vomiting thousands of ite men, Jeeps, radios, refrigera-s, and hospitals onto the beach. nderstandably, the locals were im-essed. But they also were con-nded: they never saw these ings *produced;* the goods simply peared. And how do you explain adio to someone who has no con-pt of electricity—how it is that king into a little box can cause a eat metal bird to come from a ce he didn't know existed and dump things that float down from the sky? How do you explain a cube of cold air to someone living at the equator? What is glass? What is magnification?

In a world crawling with the spirits of the dead, the answer was "magic." Local logic ran that if the white man's magic were copied accurately, the black man's cargo would come as well. Melanesians are great believers in equality, and it seemed obvious to them that if white folks had all this great stuff, they should get theirs, too. Wooden radios were built with vines running out the back as antennae; airstrips were hacked out of the jungle; lookouts were posted.

Not surprisingly, the results were disappointing. People began to suspect that the whites were hiding vital details of their sorcery, blocking the islanders from their due share of the cargo. Some discovered that there were large chunks of text missing from the Bibles the missionaries had translated into local tongues: a sure sign of conspiracy. Others simply assumed that white stinginess was at the bottom of it. In any case, the lack of cargo was taken as one more example of bad treatment stretching back well into the nineteenth century. Most islanders went on to other things.

But Tanna's cult endured, due in part to the charismatic specter at its center. Western researchers have searched for objective traces of John Prum yet have managed to generate only a wealth of unverifiable conjectures. For a brief period in the Forties, area specialists theorized that Prum was a Japanese spy posing as an American soldier. But this hypothesis, as well as the one that he actually was a G.I., overlooks the fact that John's appearance on Tanna seems to predate American military involvement in the region by as much as a decade. It may be that "John Prum" was simply a benevolent trader or missionary who visited the island during the Thirties and vowed—as all visitors do—that one day he would return.

Anthropologists—who are prone to seek universals in the specific—have advanced all manner of theories about cargo cults: as proto-nationalist movements, early examples of class struggle, the expression of anomie. Any one of these seems a plausible enough explanation for the John Prum Movement, given the quality of life on Tanna in the early twentieth century. Before



1980, the Republic of Vanuatu was the New Hebrides, so named by Captain Cook when he passed through in 1774. The first regular visitors to the New Hebrides were sandalwood traders, an unsavory crowd who allowed nothing—least of all the Melanesians—to come between them and their precious trees, destined to burn on the Buddhist altars of China. Christian missionaries began to arrive in 1839. Vengeance being a distributive property here, several were killed by the islanders as payback for the treatment they had received at the hands of the sandalwooders and other traders who'd drifted through. Needless to say, the Lord's foot soldiers persevered.

By 1863 blackbirding had begun: through force, treachery, or guile, thousands of men from all over Melanesia were loaded aboard ships bound for the sugar plantations of

Fiji and Queensland, Australia. After their labors, they were supposed to be returned to their islands, but few ever were. During the worst days of blackbirding, 750 out of every 1,000 men taken died or disappeared. On Tanna, which measures 30 miles by 15 miles, the population fell from about 15,000 in 1872 to 6,000 in 1926, largely through disease, deportation, and murder.

The missionaries, to their credit, fought blackbirding as best they could. By 1906, when the New Hebrides became a formal colony under a joint French-British condominium government, the practice had finally been banned. But the damage, both to the local population and to their image of the white man, was already done. What's more, Tanna's custom—its ancestral spirits, magic stones, and subterranean deities—was a shambles. In 1939, Christians outnumbered pagans by more than two to one. Dancing had been forbidden, as had the ritual consumption of *kava,* a narcotic extract made from a species of pepper plant. As the John Prum Movement collected followers, however, the missionaries' grip began to loosen. By 1941 fewer than a hundred Tannese were showing up for services at the mission's churches. "All they taught us was to pray-pray-pray and sing-sing-sing all the time," one man complained about the missionaries.

The early Forties were tumultuous times on Tanna. There was a run on the stores as people tried to get rid of their tainted colonial currency; some threw their money into the sea. In the north, one village built an airstrip in anticipation of cargo deliveries from America. The men of Ipikel formed what was known as the Tanna Army and marched around the island, enlisting warriors along the way.

The Tanna Army didn't do much —their guns were made of bamboo—but they scared the hell out of the colonial administration, which called in the equivalent of the National Guard. The colonials had assumed that this John Prum business was a hoax, the bridling of shiftless natives under the yoke of a new efficiency. They had thought it would all just go away after they arrested a few likely suspects and tossed them in jail for a while. But in the wake of the Tanna Army incident, the Europeans realized things were more serious than they had imagined. After firing off a few rounds and torching a hut in northern Tanna, they rounded up fifty-six men and shipped them to Vila, the capital. Some of the ringleaders remained behind bars until 1957. Three of Ipikel's leaders—the three men who had "talked" to John Prum—were among them: Tommy Nampas, the old chief in the village; Nikiau Tanimoly; and Tom Meles.

Tom Meles and Isaak Wan, Nikiau's son, stand together in their uniforms, saluting the flags on John Prum Day. They are the leaders of the John Prum Movement, and they despise each other. Stooped and tubercular, Isaak, fifty-five, sports a flashy chestful of medals. On closer inspection, I find that this resolves itself into an odd pastiche of symbols: an Air Force star, an "Airborne" patch, a medal that reads "Mississippi," a "People Power" patch with rainbow motif—all set off by a homemade sash trimmed in maroon nylon. Meles, eighty-two or thereabouts, is likewise adorned. He's crowned with a red Marine cap that fits his smallish head like a bucket; among his insignia are a pair of Northwest Airlines wings and a plastic medallion inset with a hologram of Shiva.

Meles is a visionary, the last man alive on Tanna to have "seen" the shadowy figure of John Prum: John came to him in dreams and visions in the Thirties and Forties. But it has been a long time since John last appeared, and Meles is getting on. Isaak wishes Meles would get on with getting on. He is younger by a generation, and Meles is the last barrier to his sole control of the movement. Isaak has never seen John: he draws his power—his right to lead—from the fact that his father, like Meles, was one of the early seers. Meles's authority stems from a Melanesian gift for prophecy; Isaak's, from a savvy playing of t game.

John Prum made three pr nouncements, and life in Ipikel s revolves around them. The first w a command that his followers h on to their custom, which traditio ally served as both the theology a the law of the island. He told them stop going to the mission church stop going to school, throw away t colonials' money, and return to l as they had once lived it. The resu was a fusion of ancient custom, m sionary teachings, and, later, th memory and "ritual" of the U.S. w machine that passed this way in th early Forties.

The John Prum Movement is n only alive; it is also changeable, flui It exists only in the minds of tho who belong to it—there are n texts—and therefore it tends to me whatever someone wants it to mea This is where the village divides. F John's second decree was that on day Tanna would share the whi man's wealth. Until recently, this w a proposition so far removed from r ality that it caused only a vagu gnawing yen. But that's changin About four thousand tourists a ye now come to Tanna, and eve though only a fraction of them s foot in Ipikel, that fraction is grow ing. A huge cruise boat has starte anchoring a mile or so off Ipikel beach once or twice a month (its pa sengers are then ferried up by chopp for a titillating peek into the radiar guts of Yasur). A French develop has begun grading land in nearby Po Resolution for a Club Med–style r sort. Lenakel, a town an hour aw on the west side of the island, booming: there are stores, banks, go ernment offices, a couple of small h tels. Vila—an hour's flight north o the island of Efate—is a posh Angl French outpost, and glamorous stori of life there filter down to Ipikel fro time to time. The white man's wealt is being dragged like bait through th village. And it's pretty enticing.

But many still feel the pull of th past. Few people in Ipikel reject th modern world outright, but they d want it to fit in with tradition Which brings us to John Prum' third pronouncement: "In the worl

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there are many nations, but only America is your friend." This identity with America is one of the most moving and paradoxical features of life in Ipikel. It was American soldiers who freed the leaders of the John Prum Movement, including Tom Meles, from a colonial jail in 1942; it was the Americans who had black men among them who were given authority and respect; and it was they who were the source of the flags that became symbols of Ipikel's freedom. America saved this movement once and will save it again—that much everyone can agree on. But just what constitutes salvation this time around is a much thornier question. For Isaak and his crowd, salvation is shiny and fast. For Meles and his, it is a return to a paradise lost back "in the shadows"—before the white man, before the war, before the trucks began arriving.

The road from Ipikel's village gate runs between two steep, bushy spurs out to the Ash Plain at the foot of Yasur and on to Lake Siwi. It is the only road connecting Ipikel to the world beyond. When I walked down it on my first day in Ipikel, I carried a book that belonged to my father: *John Frum, He Come*, by a journalist named Edward Rice. (John's name is pronounced *proom* or *broom*, as in "sweep away the white man"; I've corrected the spelling at the request of the faithful.) The fact that a book existed about Ipikel—and an American book at that—came as quite a surprise to the locals: the men looked at the pictures of their grandfathers and uncles with great solemnity, as if confronted by the risen dead. Tom Meles's face was on the cover. The book was published in 1974, and I had come here to find out how the movement had weathered the intervening years. Little did I know what a lively place I was walking into, or that I would become an object of struggle myself.

I first met Isaak up in Vila before my trip south to Tanna. He was there on some errand of his own invention, and my arrival was pennies from heaven. Isaak assured me I could come to stay in Ipikel, that he would feed me and reveal "some secret." Later, when I had been in Tanna for three days, I learned that Isaak had told everyone that I was an American VIP, and had ordered my little house, which was festooned with pages torn from old magazines, surrounded by bodyguards at night—not to protect me but to make himself look good.

Lolling on the mats in John Prum headquarters, I asked Isaak what he wanted from America. He smiled his crooked, gingivital smile and replied, "Things like building a good wharf or airstrips, make some factories. Cargo—white man's things—trucks, refrigerators. We just want these things to give us an easy life. These things must come under John's promise." He figures that if he can play the John Prum card astutely enough the cargo will come—not *from* John but because John has been well used.

Isaak's reasoning is in the finest tradition of cost-benefit analysis. He spins John Prum and custom as needed. But he knows that people in Ipikel will not consciously abandon their past, that he must clothe his modern urges in scripture. Still, there is no rationalizing the paradox of how to live a white man's life according to custom. On my last day in Ipikel, I asked Isaak what custom prescribes for a man whose wife has died. "You take another one!" he said promptly, man to man. Well, no. A man's wife, others had told me, is "waiting for you on the other side, and you must wait until she comes back to life." Isaak has gone back and forth among women for years and says whatever suits him. That may seem a small matter, but there are many of them, and the effect is cumulative. In a preliterate world where orthodoxy is enforced through word and example, Isaak is a degenerate king—not evil but corrosive.

One of the founding myths of Tanna, as recorded by a French anthropologist a decade ago, is that of a primordial horde of screaming stones: in the beginning, when Wuhngin—a creator spirit—made Tanna, the land was soft and a tureless. Wuhngin sent the ra which then became streams etch the first natural boundaries into landscape. Then, because Ta was still malleable and shapeless sent a band of stones—the *kapi* to give it substance. In some T nese traditions, the *kapiel* come f the sea; in others, from the ent of the earth itself. In Ipikel t come, as everything does, from sur. The *kapiel* set off around the land in a state of screaming, itin ant warfare: a tumultuous, fanta combat in which the stones divi themselves into groups that clas and battled until they came to r exhausted. Thus they both crea and became the landscape of the land, its mountains and valle capes, bluffs, and individual ro and stones.

Every skill, need, or afflictio from deftness with a spear to a g banana crop to colicky babies— a stone here that will answer for Particular groups or individuals t ditionally control particu stones—a kind of division of m cal labor that makes for a certain terdependence among villag Many festivals here celebrate a reinforce the link with oth through the exchange of food. T communalism is one of the islan oldest traditions. It grew out of t Edenic myth of the *Nepro*—a p adise lost, a time before the consta cycle of clan war and reprisal common in Melanesia until t pacifying effects of the missionar and colonials began to take hold. the *Nepro*, people circulated free the distribution of magical pow prevented one village from don nating another; each village was lied with the next; each was a tonomous, equal. If real life Tanna—war, cannibalism, wi stealing, the poisoning of enemi etc.—differed from this pretty p ture, the mythic memory of the N *pro* remained an idealized possibili For some people it still does.

But John Prum is relatively n magic, and Isaak Wan and To Meles are struggling for the right be considered the *stamba*, the ro or source, of John Prum. Isaak's m

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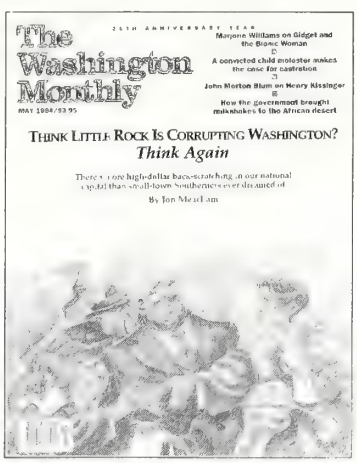
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tives are fairly straightforward: he could use the cash. Ipikel is a village with no industry. Its two stores stock a few cans of fish, bits of candy, laundry soap, and crackers. Everything necessary for survival comes from the gardens. But school fees are becoming an issue. Fourteen years after independence, the concept of taxation is just now hitting Ipikel. People are acquiring a taste for rice, an expensive habit practically unknown here until last year. And trucks are mighty intriguing. John Prum is the only cash cow in town, and Isaak knows it.

Isaak is a notorious skimmer, having been busted numerous times for lining his pockets with fees from the few tourists who make it out this far and with loans from Tanna's expatriate population (about two dozen, not including children). He likes to go to Vila on "John Prum–related business" and have a grand time smoking fancy cigarettes and mixing with the city folk. Isaak wants to be the John Prum king, but Tom Meles—the last of the original martyrs—refuses to die. And the longer Meles lives, the more likely it becomes that Isaak will fall from grace. I often asked people why they didn't just get rid of Isaak; they answered that purging him would tear apart the movement. For all his faults, Isaak is a repository of oral history in a place that can't live without it.

To give a sense of how the story of the John Prum martyrs circulates now in Ipikel, I'll let Isaak tell it: "When the Americans arrive in Vila [in 1942], they already know the three are in jail. John has told them. It is Tom Navy who takes them out of jail [Tom Navy was, in fact, Thomas Beatty, a boatswain in the Seabees]. He brings back a thousand men from Tanna to work in Vila and on [the island of] Espiritu Santo. Tom Navy then calls the chiefs to his office and gives one Marine flag to Meles and Nikiau, one to Nampas.

"After the war is over and the Americans leave, the three are arrested again and sent to jail. They stay there for seventeen years. Then the government sends them home, telling them they are free to follow John Prum. But, back on Tanna, the British Resident Commissioner tells them, 'Show me a sign that John is real, like a necktie or some shoes. If you don't show me a sign, I will raise eight flags and you will be under them.'

"The chiefs tell the young men to cut two long pieces of bamboo. Now, for the first time, the people of Ipikel raise the two Marine flags given by Tom Navy. They summon representatives of the colonial government to come and see the sign it had asked for. It comes in two trucks: one French, one British. They put their rifles up against the chiefs and the boys of Ipikel. They ask Nampas where he had gotten the flags.

"'America gave it to me, under John's promise,' he answers.

"The government says it will search for the place the flags came from: 'If I find out that you stole them, I'll come back and whip you. I will kill all of you, leaving only pigs and dogs.'

"The British RC goes to England and asks if the flags had come from there. But England says to go ask America. So he goes to America: the army office tells him to ask the Navy; the Navy tells him to ask the Marines; the Marines send him to the Negro Battalion. There, the person in charge takes a bayonet and a pistol and tells the British RC that if he wants to take that flag away or stop the John Prum Movement or kill the black man, 'first you must kill me.'

"The RC comes back to Tanna. He collects the French RC, the police, and they go to Ipikel, carrying their rifles upside down as a sign of peace. There began the period of peace, freedom."

With peace came a return to obscurity: except for the odd anthropologist and an occasional visit from a much-chastened condominium official, the outside world withdrew from Ipikel.

But if some islanders had been skeptical of John's promises before the American arrival, they needed no convincing now: like some deus ex machina, America had come [to] pulled the martyrs from their cros[s] and although Nampas, Nikiau, [and] Meles were later sent back [to] prison, the people of Ipikel ne[ver] forgot what the soldiers had d[one] for them. The "negro Marines" w[ere] further proof of kinship. The An[eri]icans had created a brotherh[ood] they couldn't have e[ver] imagined.

Elizabeth, a prophetess, is n[ear]ly blind, a Melanesian Tiresias i[n a] long, flowered dress. She agreed [to] meet me at the John Prum chu[rch] several days into my stay in Ipi[kel]. Her eyes fluttered in spasms as [she] counted for me on her fingers in [the] morumo, a language she invent[ed]. She is waiting—impatiently, [be]cause she is old—for the arrival [of] the "negro Marines" from Ameri[ca]. Elizabeth thinks of these black s[ol]diers as her brothers; their arri[val] will be the last link in a long ch[ain] of signs that has been building h[er] for more than fifty years. When th[ey] come, she will teach them Tumo[ro] mo, she said, so that they can spe[ak] to one another about John. Wh[en] they come, paradise will be at ha[nd]. She will shed her old skin like[a] snake or a crab.

Elizabeth is the keeper of t[he] church, which has two crosses. T[he] first is not so much a cross as [a] piece of four-by-four set upright [in] the black gravel floor: this is t[he] "custom cross," and on it the lo[cal] people crucified Jesus Christ, [a] black man from Tanna. Later, d[ur]ing the time of Noah's Ark, his sp[irit] it went with Mary to "A-Mary-k[a]" where Mary gave birth again, t[his] time to the white Jesus known [to] us. The second cross is five feet t[all] and red: it was given by John Pru[m] as "a sign of the white Jesus, w[ho] was crucified in Bethlehem." Wh[en] the black Jesus was crucified on t[he] custom cross, "all the chiefs of Ta[n]na were decided"; when the whi[te] Jesus was crucified, "all the fla[gs] went red and the governments [of] the world were decided."

In Elizabeth's fertile mind, h[er] brothers, the "negro Marines," a[re] the key to America: in her languag[e] "negro" is the name of the first pla[ce]

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By a MANIFESTO announced in January, 1995, the oceans and seabeds of Earth are made he common property of all residents of Earth, together with the airspace above, Antarctica and arth's moon. All are included within World Federation. Ownership is lodged on behalf of umanity in the Federal World Government organized under the Constitution for the Federation f Earth, with a World Parliament to which both the people of Earth and the National overnments elect delegates.

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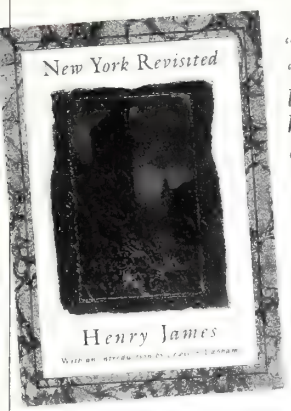
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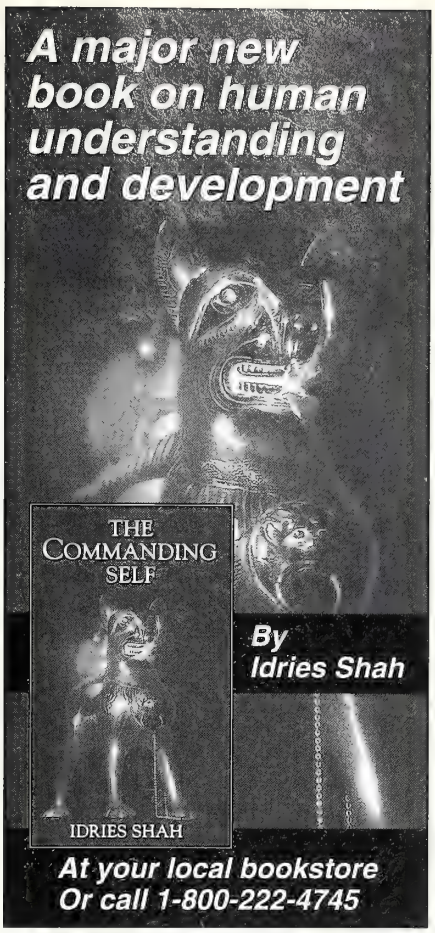
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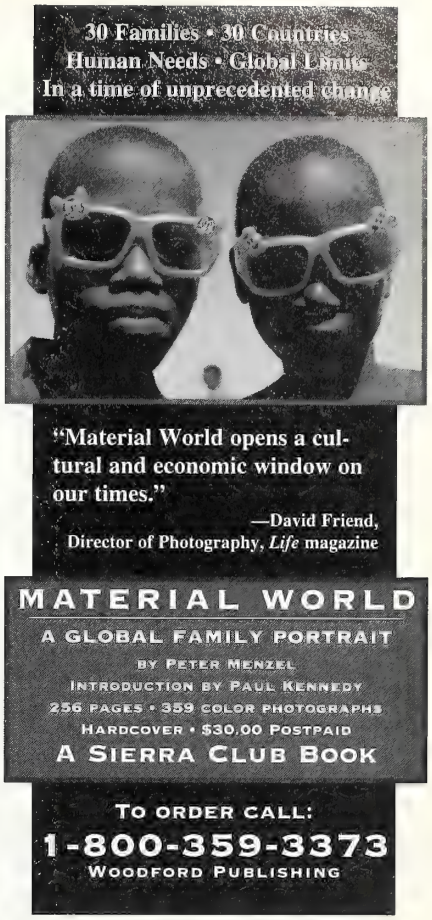
in the world, and the "Marines" those who make grass skirts. Ed and the *Nepro* became one as s explained how these soldiers linked with the Fall, with the gr skirt—the fig leaf, the symbol Eve's transgression. The fact th the Marines are black shows Eli beth that they have held on to th custom more than white me When she has taught them Tun rumo, they will be able to transl for the white Americans, and t gether they can come to Tanna soothe the divisions and enmit that have grown up among the rui of the *Nepro*. When the new M rine flag—red with the blood of sus—arrived in Ipikel recently, was the last sign befo the advent of paradise.

When I learned that Isaak h posted a bodyguard around n house, it confirmed my suspici that I was being manipulated. As American journalist I'd become, f obvious reasons, something of magic stone myself. Initially, I h assumed that the constant tailing was being subjected to was just th usual fishbowl effect of being white, blond freak in a small, blac town. But after a couple of days, began to sense the perimeters th had been constructed for me—ju how far I could go without "friend" appearing at my side. Us ally that friend was Royal, a solem and charming man of thirty. (I w staying in his brother's house.) Lik most people in Ipikel, Royal is we aware of Isaak's limitations; he torn, but follows nonetheless. Roy performed his surveillance witho much gusto, but there he was.

It wasn't until I met Tom Nak that I understood why I was bein watched so closely. Nako is To Meles's disciple, and when he speak he sounds like John the Baptis Small, dark, and handsome, he is a evangelical—fired by a pure strai of John Prum fundamentalism. He' been evaluating me from afar. "I a like a dog," he said. "With each ne person who comes—*sniff, sniff*— know their hearts: if their hearts a with business, I let them go to Isaak if their hearts are with custom,

ng them to the John Prum
ırch."
Until that day, my dealings with
ık had left me certain that the
ctacle I'd traveled half the world
witness was no more, a bloodless
k. When I met Tom Nako, I re-
ed how wrong I'd been. For if
k's thinking is linear, Nako's is
sty, a millennial frenzy. It is no
ident that Isaak has "seen no
ı of John" in thirty-seven years:
doesn't have a spiritual bone in
body. But Tom Nako can't swing
ead cat without hitting a sign of
n: it is in his mind that John
m lives on, that the old world
the new are being reconciled.
When Isaak discovered I had
ı talking to Tom Nako, his atti-
e toward me began to change. To
ık, Nako represents the threat
only of the rising generation but
of the true believer—the charis-
of the possessed. At first, Isaak
le oblique suggestions that if I
ded to know anything I should
free to come to him directly. Fi-
y, he lost his patience.
Isaak and I had taken to meeting
emisecrecy at his house. But a se-
is a valuable commodity in
lanesia. We were having our
d such meeting one morning
en a knock on the door sum-
ned us to the Community House,
open-walled hut built into
el's central banyan tree that also
es as the John Prum bandshell.
here was Isaak in darkest glow-
With him were eight or nine of
sycophants. Gathered under the
ning of a nearby house—and
cing none too happy about the
y—were twenty young lieu-
ants, Royal among them. Isaak
clearly ordered them to be
e, to show us what we were up
nst. Nako was uneasy, to say the
t. "You've got to help me," he
spered. "I'm alone." To be alone
Melanesian village is the most
eme form of punishment; even
tics and murderers are spared it.
was trembling.
aak started in on Nako in
ak, the local language, but I
w pretty well what he was say-
Then he turned to me: "If you
t to know about John, you come



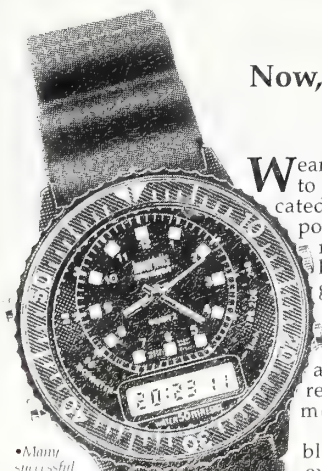


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to me. This one knows nothing about John. I am the chief." Then he said, "If you want to know about custom, about the volcano, you can talk to anyone. But for John, you must come to me."

I quickly began leafing through my notebook. "But Isaak, I *was* talking to Tom about custom. See? I was asking him about the rules for drinking *kava*, the names of the *nakamals* [drinking grounds] in Ipikel, the names of the four spirits that live in Yasur." This placated him somewhat. But above all, I think he was afraid of making a martyr of Nako. Isaak cannot compete with a martyr, and Nako would make a willing candidate. From that day on, Isaak kept asking me when I was going to leave.

Toward the end of my stay in Ipikel, Tom Nako arranged for me to meet old Tom Meles, who lives in Lear-like isolation—partly because that is the way of Melanesian chiefs, but partly, I suspect, because of Isaak's efforts to marginalize him. We were to meet in the dark of night out at the new school, Ipikel's first: three church-like huts with an empty fire extinguisher for a bell. Nako told me that Meles would take a path through the bush; if asked, I was to answer that I was walking out to Lake Siwi.

In that first meeting, I heard Meles's version of the early days of the movement: how John had appeared to him first as a white man, then as a black man; how he had suffered for seventeen years in John's name; how he finally returned to Tanna and raised the Marine flag. A few nights later, he called me back to the school. He wanted to tell me a part of the story that he'd omitted. He'd done so for the same reason anyone hides the sources of his power, I suppose. But as he grew comfortable with me, he began to see that I was very likely his last journalist, his last chance to speak to America.

He waited for me at his pew in a flowery lavalava and an extremely warm-looking wool shirt, a piece of straw bent casually around his toothless head like a peasant crown. His long, brittle frame was a composition in collapse. When he spoke, he moved only his head, while his eyes, set high in that perfect, bony globe, remained fixed on the kerosene flame. He began to tell me about when John had taken him to paradise:

"John opened the barrier and went through, and called for me to follow him. When I went through, I realized I was in paradise. I saw that there were many, many people there. All the people were fat, so that when you prick their skin the blood comes rushing out. In paradise you see no mountains. Everything is flat. And there is no work; they only play in paradise."

When he'd finished, Meles turned to me and said, "Now I have told you about John, and I want to know: When are the Americans going to come and meet me? I am an old man now, and I'm still waiting. I'm afraid that when I die Isaak will take my place."

Meles wasn't able to say what, exactly, he was waiting *for*. ("I don't want any more knives," he said bitterly; I'd just given him one.) Meles is old, a little foggy, and he hasn't quite worked out the mechanics of his own salvation. He knows he wants to get to paradise, and he knows that America is the route to paradise, but he's unable to explain how the one leads to the other. He knows that the time is coming.

Young Tom Nako and Elizabeth, the blind prophetess, *do* know what they're waiting for. For them life in Ipikel is an elaborate preparation for a return to the *Nepro:* the lost Eden of a united Tanna, without conflict or jealousy. The mission of John Prum's disciples, as they see it, is to forge the connections needed to bring the island together, to overcome the rivalries that characterize life here and in most of Melanesia. The community of John Prum followers, which is spread thinly over the entire island, is a model of what must take place in order for paradise to come.

The memory of the cooperative spirit the Tannese experienced during the American occupation in 1942 has survived until now. It was a taste of the *Nepro*. For Tom Nako and Elizabeth, the spoils of modern ty are beside the point: tourism a development are an excuse, a divi mechanism, for bringing the Ame cans to Tanna. They do not wa America's cargo; they want o strength. Or, as Tom Meles said the school that night, "I don't wa independence. I want be ruled by America."

The final irony of all this is th America isn't coming. Isaak w learn eventually that he mu scratch his Toyota from the very s he grew up on. As for the fundame talists, their fate is more ambiguo Frank Lambert, now the Catho bishop of Vanuatu, first met To Meles in the late Forties. "He w sitting in his hut like Moses in l tent," with a piece of rope runni out the window to pick up signa news of John. Lambert said he n with Meles a year or so ago and th the old man broke down in tea "He said, 'I've been waiting fif years. People are starting to laugh us. There must be *something* to wh we believe in.'"

Such is the undercurrent of d spair that runs through Ipikel no On my last night, in the *nakamal* man I'd never met approached n "Our parents told us that one d the Marines would come," he sa "I need to know: Were they lying us?" He said he thought that my h ing there meant they hadn't lie that America was coming. I to him I didn't know but that I didn think so. Just then Royal's young brother walked in carrying a ukule made from an old wooden box. was a Friday evening, the Jol Prum sabbath. People come from over Tanna on Fridays—many wi battered guitars, most on foot—fo folksy John Prum sing-along in t Community House. I asked Roy whether his brother was the ne generation of John Prum minstr He looked his serious look. "Y William. That's how things st alive."

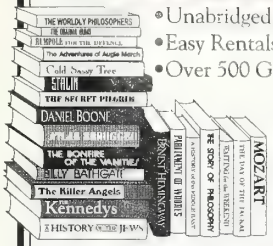
As I walked back from the *nak mal*, I knew Royal was right. Y somehow it seemed that what t movement needed was another ep moment in its history—maybe a

er martyr. It is an odd thing to h for. But America was a pale l distant thing that night: pale npared to an old man shuffling in lamplight, two feathers in his r like horns; compared to the men singing piercingly, alarming- in their grass skirts and best sses; compared to the children ning in the rain. ■

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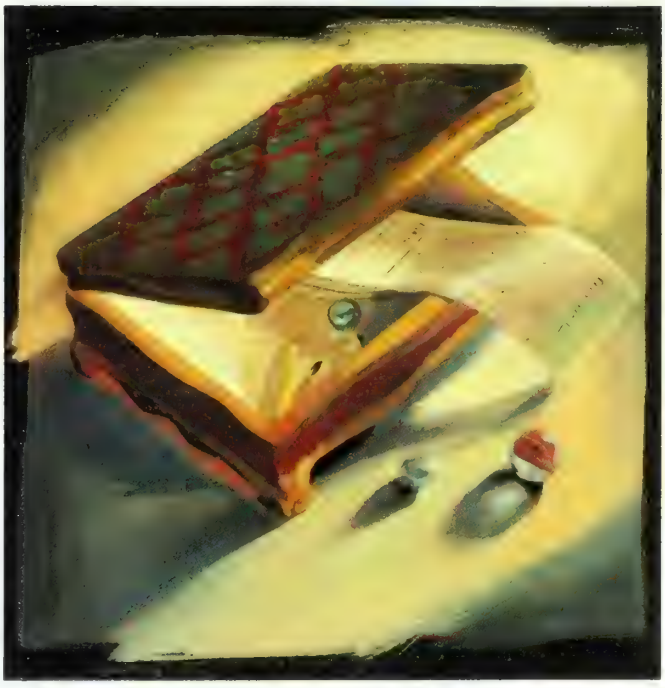
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SLEEP

By Stephen Dixon



Several people wanted to see him to his car after the burial but he said, "No, I'd like to walk to it by myself, I don't know why. Do you mind? And everyone has a ride back? Good. Then thanks for coming, and I guess I'll be seeing you." He was thinking of sleep even then, during the short walk. How, in maybe an hour, or two to three, he'll be in bed, under or on top of the covers, phone off the hook or in some way disconnected, curtains closed. Moments after she died, or maybe a minute after, but anyway, almost the first thing he thought once he realized she was dead was, "Now I can sleep better." Or was it, "Now I can get some sleep"? Now in the car he thinks, "What'll be my procedure for today, and one day at a time after that?" He'll go home, park, pick up the newspaper somewhere around the carport where it's always delivered, go in the house, take off his shoes, the tie of course, he won't get the mail, prepare a scotch on ice with his usual splash of water—a big scotch, so a couple of splashes: he wants to sleep—sit in his chair in the living room with the paper and read it while sipping the drink, not let himself go to pieces, maybe only one section, maybe the whole paper except the business section. That one he never reads unless it has something he's interested in continued from the first page. He'll start with the arts, food, science, and home section, the everything-but-news section, he calls it. It's usually light, uncomplicated, plenty of photos and reviews and sort of timeless articles, will be easy to read and maybe even distractin He won't read the obit ary page. It's never in t everything-but sectio which may be why h thinks he'll only re that one. Or maybe will read it. Hers will there, or should, since placed it yesterday a in plenty of time. "H lo," he said on the pho soon after he got hor from the hospital and g the number out of t newspaper, "I'd like place an obituary f one Wanda Monter Would you like me spell it?" "Eventual yes," the woman sai "but first let me ha yours and how we shou bill it." He started ra bling on about what wanted to put in and how he'd li it worded. The woman helped hi "'Loving wife of Courtney Patto okay?" "Fine," he said, "but t flowers." "Well, it could be 'in li of flowers,' or just 'no flowers,' something about contributions charities instead of flowers," and said, "Come to think of it, none that. I'd like to keep it short, o the essentials, and not to save m ey; just that that's how I think obit should be: who it is, where a what day and time it is, and w survived, I don't know why. Me ing, I don't know why I think

Stephen Dixon is the author of sixteen works of fiction. The Stories of Stephen Dixon, a selected collection of his work, was published by Henry Holt last April.

Illustration by Gwyn Stra

it should be like this." But when
: died, in his arms, in the hospi-
, she was already dead. Of course
: was dead if she'd died, but he
ans he saw her in the bed looking
ıd, rushed to her, held her in his
ns, first lifted her up from the
ist, he means from under her arms
she was sitting up straight from
waist and of course only with his
›port, and then held her in his
ıs. She was cold, motionless, life-
s, her eyes were closed, body
med cold, she had that look he
s told in a matter of days to ex-
t, her skin becoming what they
› said to expect. He thought, "My
ling"—thought this then—"now I
ı sleep better." Or "Now I can get
ıe sleep." Both sound right but he
y thought one of them. And did
say it rather than think it? He
sn't know, and could be he did
ı. And it wasn't a hard thought
emark, was it? Meaning, not a
ı one, a deliberately self-centered
ughtless one, was it? One could
n say that at the time he said or
ught it he was in some kind of
ck. Probably, but probably not.

Meaning, one could say that, but he wasn't.

Now he's home, in the living
m in his favorite chair, didn't get
paper, no, got the paper but not
mail. Way he sees it, won't get it
days. Phone disconnected?—for-
s but thinks he did, drink in his
ıd, double scotch with a double
ısh, unopened newspaper in his
. It was only yesterday, wasn't it?
›ws it was only yesterday, and it
sn't a hard thought or remark,
it? and knows if he knows any-
ng that he wasn't in any kind of
›ck. He'd taken care of her for
nths, so was prepared. Well, even
n one could still not be, meaning
t right up to the last minute and
pite every kind of preparation for
ıgainst it, one still doesn't know.
aning . . . well, he knows what.
›k care of her for four years or
re, five, six, at home, in the hos-
ıl, mostly at home but the last
r or so each time a little more in
hospital, always by her side
en she was home and sometimes
ı bed beside hers in the hospital.
He could have moved to another room at home. They had two bedrooms and a study that could be turned into one, but he continued to sleep with her. She made such noises at home. Not just snores and groans. He liked to joke about it with her if he thought she was in the right mood for it, though sometimes if he was feeling cross or exhausted because her noises had kept him up the previous night, he joked about it even when he knew her mood was sour or dark, but she never found it funny no matter how well he thought he'd gauged that her mood was good. "My hibernating Siberian bear—that's what you sounded like last night." "I'm not laughing," she said. Another time: "Really, you slept like a groveling warthog last night, and you rolled over like one too. You thrashed and spit and chomped as if you were eating bark or slop." "Screw you too," she said, "for it should be obvious I can't help it, and you think your blowing and snorting doesn't keep me up?" "Nothing like yours does, because nothing could be louder, and it just kept coming. I felt like leaving the room and sleeping in the guest room or on the couch." "So why didn't you? I only wish I could do that when you wheeze and grunt through half the night. But it'd mean struggling for an hour to get there if I didn't have your help. And if I fell down on the way and you didn't hear me because you were sleeping so soundly, I'd be there till morning." "You're just saying I make noises like that, or if I do, then saying I do it as much as you, to get back at me; but all right, I understand. But it's also that I get anxious every night I go to sleep, thinking I won't get any rest for the next day." "You get plenty; you sleep more than your fill. It's me who's starving for it and needs it much more than you. But as I said, sleep somewhere else if you don't like my moving around in bed and my sounds. And if you do want to sleep with me or just in this bed here, put up with it best you can. But not, which you like to do, wake me by jabbing or stabbing my back or yelling in my ear." "I only do that, and never that hard or loud, to stop you from making those noises; otherwise I'd never get any sleep." Another time: "It seemed like a whole barnyard of animals was sleeping on your side of the bed last night: mooing, whistling, growling, snarling, clicking, snapping, barking, and squalling, besides what seemed like blubbery bubbles popping out of your mouth and nose." "Thank you, oh thank you, but don't give me that crap you couldn't get any sleep again. I got up several times to go potty—I wish I didn't but my stupid body makes me—and you were dead asleep like a baby each time." "I was pretending," he said. "More lies." And he said, "That's what you'd like to believe, and I'm not going to start contradicting you now. Last thing I want, after everything else, is another big argument and you crying away with real fat tears. For the next hour just forget I'm alive." She said something to that but he forgets what. Tonight he'll sleep. Hasn't slept much the last three weeks, but tonight he thinks he will only because he's so tired and what's there now to stop him? Four nights ago she was up all night, coughing, breathing hard, complaining of pain. Took her to the hospital the following morning. Next two nights he slept in the hospital, in a chair in her room or in the visitors' lounge on a chair or couch. They weren't really sleeps. Her noises were very loud when he tried sleeping in her room, and the lounge was cold, and the couch, which was more like a long board with thin plastic cushions on it, was uncomfortable, maybe not so much for sitting but definitely for sleeping on, which might have been what the hospital had in mind when they bought it.

"Do you want to mention surviving parents?" the newspaper-obituary person said. "Or even grandparents or children, if there are any?" "Oh yes, her parents," and gave their names. "No grandparents or children, though. We couldn't have any—children, I mean." "I'm sorry," she said, and he said, "Oh, it wasn't a problem for us, and I apologize if I

said it in a way to make you feel it was, for we didn't mind no kids. Short as it was, we had a nice life together, thought of each other as soul mates till she got ill. Meaning, we had a nice life together till she got ill, and even after that it was okay, and we were for the most part soul mates till she got very ill. Then we were still pretty good to each other but, as you can imagine, it became very hard on us both." "I'm sorry," she said. Friends wanted to go home with him, and his wife's sister. He forgot to put her name in the obit but she'll understand, if she even sees it, since she should already be on the train home by now and she probably also, like most people, doesn't read newspapers from any city but her own. He said to all of them he wanted to be alone today. He'll sleep, have a drink, have a drink first and then sleep, have two or three drinks, but anyway he'll be all right, so don't worry, he said. Tomorrow too and for the days to come, if they don't mind, till he phones them, if he does, or contacts them in some way. "Oh, do," they said. "A letter maybe," he said. "Whichever way you choose." And he said he would. "You know you can come to our house for dinner any night you want," one friend of theirs said. "Several nights a week even, and for as many weeks as you like. The invitation's open and open-ended." "I know," he said. His in-laws flew in from their city and were flying back soon after the funeral. Nice people. He said goodbye to them at the grave site and while he was kissing their cheeks he thought, "I'll probably never see them again." It must have been very tough on them the last few days. Of course, what's he saying? And of course for him too.

He sips his drink, opens the paper, starts to pull out the everything-but section, then thinks, "Oh, go to the obits, you know you're curious." Curious? Well, something. He just wants to see, her name, his, together, his right after hers. "Just 'husband,'" he told the newspaper-obit woman, "for 'loving' goes without saying, or should. And even if it didn't apply, though in my case it did, it had to have at the start or some part of anybody's marriage, wouldn't you say? and who am I trying to impress with that word anyway?" "That's not why people include it." And he said, "Then why, can you tell me? I've always been interested, or have, occasionally, when I've read obituaries, or maybe only one other time but today," and she said, "Lots of reasons, too many to go into, for everyone seems to have his own." A little part of him also wants to see if the obit came out the way he wanted or if the woman didn't instinctively insert a few of those loving and adoring adjectives. No, they're pros, so they wouldn't do that, and they also know the customer pays by the word so might object to anything extra. And then to tear it out. Rather, fold it over in four places and then cut it at the seams carefully. That's what he really wants to do most and maybe even without reading it. For if he doesn't cut it out now he might forget for later and then he won't have it, the paper having gone out with the trash or, if he continues to do some of the same routines he did before she died, the biweekly paper pickup for recycling. And where should he put it after he cuts it out? Little things like that get quickly lost. In the intricately carved Indian wooden box on the fireplace mantel where he already has a pair of cuff links from when he was a teenager and a gold tie pin from then too with only his three initials on it and some marbles from when he was even younger that his mother found behind her stove twenty years ago when she had it replaced and a couple of his baby teeth, "two of your first three," she said, "though I can't say for sure if either of these is your very first," a metal token from a board game he had when he was around ten, the marriage announcement his in-laws placed in their local paper of his wife and him and her photo, and—who knows?—years from now, two, three, he'll see the obit folded up in the box and look at it as he did the marriage announcement a few days ago, though that one he did intentionally, and remember this day, the funeral, burial, walking from the grave to car by himself, how he cut the out, what gave him the idea to it—what did?—even him sitt here. So he opens the paper to obituaries, finds hers, and re Everything got in right. The wor was a lot of help. Doesn't say a thing about sleep or the need fo For some reason he thought he something about it in. He sho have, for himself only, no mat how strange it would have seen to anyone reading it. But w Well, so years or a year from n when he takes it out of the box reads it for the first time since to he'll recall his thoughts now ab sleep. Not enough reason to r seeming so senseless, and the ne paper-obit woman would never h let him put it in if he'd wanted and was willing to pay, let's s even triple the charge. They h standards to maintain that mo can't buy. They can't have oddb and brooders and loonies and pra cal jokers horsing around or mak light of or acting crazy on w should be a solemn page. Most p ple take the obits quite seriou and there are many who read th every day, and some where it's first thing they turn to in the pa They've told him, at least one two have, how it makes life for th seem more poignant, or meaning or fragile, or something along th lines. Especially the paid obits t say "surviving parents and grandp ents," for that says something ab the deceased's age.

They should have had childr He means he wishes they had h them, his wife and he. Sure, would have been sad for a child see his or her mother die, but would have had these kids or at le one to be with after. He might e be taking care of them this min instead of sitting here thinki about them. Making them lunch, taking them out for lunch, or lu home and then going to the p with them perhaps, places the like to go, like the zoo or merry-g round or both, and then to so place in the park for a snack, nearby for dinner if it's around t time. Trying to distract them fr

r mother's death, is what he's
ng, while at the same time using
n to take his mind off of it too,
ıer than him drinking here
e, paper in his lap, place quiet,
les down, windows shut, curtains
ed, chair he's in lit by a floor
ɔ in a room usually flooded at
time with natural daylight. Oh,
he cut the obit out now, and he
s that page of the paper out,
ses the part around the obit,
ı thinks, "Too slow, it's going to
anyway, or might, paper's so
," and rips the obit out, tears off
: pieces till the area around it is
uare, and puts it on the side
e next to him. No, he might
his drink on it, or the next one,
lmost certainly the one after
. Or it might be blown off the
: when he just walks past it, or
ı the little breeze he makes
n he stands, and then get lost
:r the couch or something and
be when he next sees it in a
ıth or two he'll have, without
y looking at it, forgotten what it
r he'll remember or read it but
be so covered with dust balls
stuff that he'll just throw it
, though regret that he did lat-
Put it in a safe spot now," he
ks, "and you'll know you have
and he gets up and sticks it in
mantel box and then sits again
ıe same chair.
ɔ where was he? Children he
n't have. He'd see to them for
He'd do everything he could for
ı, try to be both parents, what-
that means. He would have
ı such a good father, he's almost
of it. He'd probably cry a lot
ı them; over their mother, he
ns. They'd be crying, or inter-
ently, how could they not be?
he'd start in too when he saw
n that way. He wouldn't be
ıking of sleeping, he doesn't
k. Or maybe just thinking of it
with no immediate plans to carry
ıt. He'd be too busy doing other
gs. He also wouldn't think of
ıng out the obituary. Wouldn't
t it around to remind them of
mother, if they found it. Well,
:ad he could put it in his wallet,
ake out and look at when he
:s, but it'd be in shreds in a cou-

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Syria and the Peace Process

Is it a partner that Israel should trust?

In order to promote the Middle East peace process, President Clinton recently extended the signal honor of a state visit to President Hafez Assad of Syria. Our president's hope to wring any "concessions" out of Mr. Assad were unfulfilled. We must ask ourselves whether "Syria is a reliable partner in any peace agreement and whether Israel, from which many "concessions for peace" are being asked, would be wise to entrust its security to Syrian promises.

What are the facts?

A Rogue Country and a Rogue President. Syria is an outlaw country and is classified as a "terrorist state" by the United States. Terror is the most pervasive aspect of the Syrian regime. Much of that terror is conducted through "clients", such as the terrorist bands of the PLO, the infamous Hamas, and the Iran-sponsored Hizbullah, to all of which Syria extends protection and warm hospitality. Syria's most ruthless terror, however, is reserved for its internal opposition. In 1982, President Assad put down a rebellion in the town of Hama, in which he killed 20,000 people.

More cunning even than his Iraqi counterpart, President Saddam Hussein, he shares with him utter ruthlessness. disregard of human life and above all an abiding hatred of the West, which means primarily the "big-devil", the United States and the "little devil", Israel, the perceived outpost of Western culture, of Western democratic concepts, and of "American imperialism" in the Middle East.

Main sources of Syria's revenue are the large-scale and officially conducted narcotics trade, and massive counterfeiting of American currency. Few doubt that Mr. Assad personally authorized the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans lost their lives and in the blowing up of Pan Am Flight #103, in which 270 people died. Even today, Assad gives hospitality to surviving thugs of the Nazi regime, outstanding among them Alois Bruner, Eichman's deputy and main slaughterer. The terror in Israeli cities could not possibly occur if President Assad were to forbid it.

The Obsession with the Golan. Since the founding of Israel in 1948, Syria has attacked it three times, by surprise and without provocation. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Syria suffered a decisive defeat and lost the Golan Heights, a Queens-sized plateau. Israel has been in possession ever since. The Golan is of vital strategic importance to Israel because it makes a Syrian attack against Israel virtually impossible. On the Golan, Israel is protected by sophisticated electronic surveillance and warning systems and by one of the deepest and most formidable obstacle systems in the world. The Golan is desolate and serves no real purpose, except as a defense post for Israel or as an attack-launching pad for Syria. Syria is obsessed with the Golan and has stated over and over again that it will not make peace with Israel unless and until the Golan is handed back in its entirety. But if such an exchange—the Golan Heights for peace—should come about, Israel's continued existence or destruction would depend on the good will of the Syrian dictator or his successor. It's a risk that Israel should not be asked to assume.

> "For Israel to survive, the Golan must stay in Israeli hands. The Golan is the price the Syrians must pay for their aggressions. All things considered, it's a small price."

The conflict between Syria and other Arabs with Israel is not about land—it is about Israel's very existence. No other country in the world would be expected to yield indispensable strategic ground to those who are sworn to destroy it. One may ask why Israeli leaders, among them experienced generals, would wish to consider such a gamble. But leaders do make fatal errors in judgment. We only need to remember British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who in his quest for peace agreed to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and thus brought about the Second World War. Considering that Syria is a rogue country with a rogue president, Israel should not make its survival dependent on Syria's "goodwill". Yes, there must be concessions. But, for Israel to survive, the Golan must stay in Israeli hands. The Golan is the price the Syrians must pay for their aggressions. All things considered, it's a small price.

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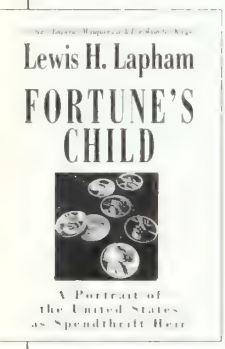
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ple of weeks. He's found that newspaper clippings don't last long there and magazine articles or pieces he's cut out of them do just a little better.

He did think of sleeping when she died, though. Right after it, he means. Thought it right after. He held her in his arms. Picked her up, lifted her from behind. He was facing her, standing up but leaning over, and put his arms under her and held her back up as he lifted her toward him. He was standing, or sitting up on the end of the bed, he forgets which. At the edge of it, he means, and if there then he would have had to lower the side rail first and he doesn't remember doing that. The side rail was always up except when a nurse or aide was changing the bed. So, standing, most likely. Yes, standing, definitely; it makes sense and it's what he pictures too. "She's like a rag doll," he thought then, when he was holding her up. No, he thought that later. No, he thought it then but told a friend about it at the funeral home that night. "I picked her up." This was only last night. He can hardly believe it: just last night. "I picked her up. Lifted her away from the bed. I knew she was dead. Knew it beforehand, knew it now. She was like a rag doll in my arms. I know that isn't an original thought or comparison or whatever it is for what she was but it is what I thought." He didn't tell this friend that the first thing he thought or said aloud to himself after he looked at her and thought she was dead was, "She's dead, now I can get some sleep." Or "Now I'll get some sleep." Or "I can sleep better now" or "Now I can sleep better now that she's dead" or "I'll be able to." Or was it "Now that she's dead I'm going to get a lot of sleep"? Or "I'm so tired I'm going to bed right after the burial and sleep for I don't know how long. A day, I mean a whole one, or maybe two."

He must have known he wouldn't sleep the night of the day she died. Wouldn't sleep that night, he means. There were still lots of things to do and so many thi running around in his head, a where could he sleep, since wouldn't be home or at least sleep till the next day? Then he the hospital room and went do the hall. Though first he rested back on the bed, set her down w her back back on the bed, just her back down the same way was before he lifted her. He let down, that's all, meaning, he her down, or set her down, and ri after that he kissed her lips. Wan to do it then before things in body really started changing. He told to expect that too. Of cou they were already changing weren't yet visible, or to him. W to no one so far, for he was the o one in the room. "Do it now," told himself. He definitely remo bers saying that, and aloud. "D now, for you're going to do it so time before you bury her." And t bent down and kissed her. He di press hard with his lips; he just them rest on hers for a few seco He forgets what hers felt like never recorded the impression— impression in his mind, he mean and he also probably closed eyes—he always did when kissed; hers had been closed for days, at least every time he loo at them—and went outside room—it was a private one—s the door—he didn't want ot people looking in—and went to nurses' station and said, "I think wife died, Wanda Monterra, or M Patton, you might have her d as. In fact, I'm almost sure s dead—I'm positive, really. shows all the signs you told me some other nurses did, to look for—room 823. Please see to right away." He rushed back to room. He doesn't know why rushed. After all, she was d Maybe because she was alone he didn't want to leave her t way; he didn't know why or wh it'd hurt, but something told hi was wrong. But he thinks thought then, "Maybe there'll miracle and she'll be alive wh get back, even beginning to re er. Maybe my kiss did it. That it all she needed to pop out o

t am I thinking of? She's dead,
dead, so start getting used to
He thinks he thought all that
maybe in different words or
some of the same. A couple of
es, doctors, and aides—in other
s, several people, maybe six or
n—barged into the room a
ıte later, so it took them about
minutes to come from the time
ɔld the nurse at the station.
quickly sent him out.
ter, he went to a public pay
ıe on the floor and called his
s parents and a funeral home.
he waited outside her room for
medical team to come out. A
minutes later two nurses came
and walked past him and he
ıt up with them down the hall
said, "She's dead, my wife, in
isn't she?" and the nurse said,
y, I didn't see you. One of the
ɔrs will speak to you when he's
ıgh in there. Just stop him." He
back to the door and opened
anted to see what they were do-
f they were trying to revive her,
ey were only cleaning her up,
ın aide standing by the door in-
said, "Something you want?"
her husband." And the aide
"Oh, excuse me. We're not
yet; soon." A doctor came out
ıt five minutes later, went
ght to him, and said, "We
ght it would be today, didn't
We talked about it, you and I,
ıearly sure I recall that. I knew,
ast, it'd be soon: today, tomor-
ɔr the next day. I think that's
we said, so it's not we're sur-
d she died today; the medical
I'm saying." He asked what he
d do now and the doctor said,
can go in; everyone will leave.
ı when you're done you can
your phone calls to people and
e funeral home you have in
, but because we have some
work to do in here, from one
phones down the hall. While
e doing that—phoning, I'm
g—your wife will be taken to
ıer place downstairs, so don't
armed if you don't see her in
when you return. Though you
t see her. Sometimes we don't
ıings done as fast as we want."
ent into the room; the bed had

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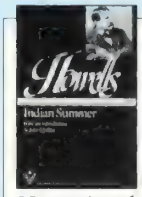
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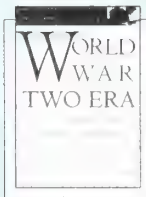
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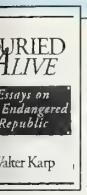
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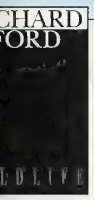
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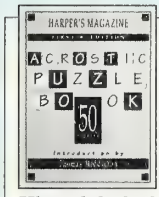
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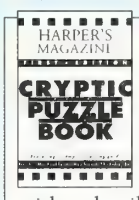
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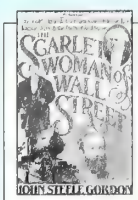
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been remade, covers pulled up to her neck and tucked over, her arms evenly by her sides. He lifted her hands and kissed them, said, "Goodbye, my dear." Of course he cried, a little, a lot. In fact, he thinks he broke down; yes, he broke down, so much so that if someone had been there he's sure he would have collapsed or fallen or done something like that into that person's arms. Because no one was there—well, of course someone was, but he knows what he means—he thinks he had to hold on to something to stop him from collapsing: the bed rail or headboard. He tries to picture himself then. He thinks he actually braced his hand against the wall to keep standing, then sat in the chair by her bed and looked at her and left.

He went to the pay phone down the hall and called the funeral home. Then he called her parents in the hotel they were at, hoping they were in. He didn't want to leave a message and have to call again and again. They took it badly. He realizes now he should have called them first and doesn't know why he didn't. There was no rush for the funeral home to send a hearse over for the body. She first had to be examined and there were some documents he had to sign, the doctor had told him, and the hospital was also going to remove a couple of her parts. Her parents had been there that morning and left an hour before she died, telling him they were coming back with their daughter that evening. Their other daughter, he of course means. He hopes he didn't offend or hurt them when he said he'd just got through speaking to the funeral home, which they must have picked up meant he hadn't called them first. Anyway, that's the order he made his calls yesterday, next calling a few friends and co-workers of theirs to tell other friends and co-workers that her funeral will be tomorrow at the Clementz Funeral Home sometime around noon, look for the obituary in the paper for the exact time. He of course first told these people that his wife had died. Then he returned to her room, but the bed was empty and stripped and the linen was in a pile on the floor. He thinks, "Did they remake her bed with fresh linen just for the short time I'd be in the room with her after the doctors and nurses left?" He means, did they remake it only for the time he'd be in there alone? He didn't ask anyone at the hospital if that was so, but if it was it was very considerate of them but probably unnecessary. But it's just linen, probably washed with a ton of other linen in a big vat somewhere in the hospital and not thrown out, so what's the difference? Then he went home, thought of having a scotch but made himself coffee, placed the obit in the paper, said he'd call back in an hour or so with the exact funeral time. Phone rang a number of times but he didn't answer. "Couldn't speak to anyone now," he thought, "just couldn't," and suppose it was someone who wanted a contribution of some sort or was trying to sell him something? A grave site, for instance. They've called for that, maybe more calls for it than for anything else they're selling. "We don't plan to die," he used to tell them. "We're both very healthy, and besides I don't like these calls coming to my home." Then: "We got two graves that were part of a friend's plot, all we need, so no thank you, and I also have to tell you I don't at all like these calls coming to my home." Changed his clothes, brushed his teeth, thought about shaving but didn't see any reason to. Now he has almost a two-day growth, or is it three? and it doesn't feel itchy, so he'll shave sometime after he wakes up. He's certainly not going to grow a beard. She always wanted him to, or said she thought he might look good in one and only way to find out was to grow it. Went to the funeral home to choose a casket and see to some details of the funeral: flowers, officiator—he had none, so they said they'd get someone for him. She was there by now, and he waited in the lobby while they worked on her, called the newspaper with the exact time of the funeral and where the burial would be, and when the funeral people had her ready he sat by her casket in the sitting room r served for her. Some friends and h family came, sat beside him awhi tried talking to him but he wasn talking. He knew it was just as s for them, but in different ways—a ter all, she was a loved woman a very close to her family—but not ing he could say could help the and they couldn't help him. H mother asked if she could have t casket opened for a few minut and he nodded and left the roo Spent the night in the sitting ro with the casket. Tried sleeping s ting up on the couch there but or got a half an hour in. He didn sleep well, little there was of it. course she made no noises. N that's a terrible joke. It's not a jo He means, it wasn't meant as o and he doesn't know why he sai or what it is. It just came out. C in his head, if that's possible. said it seriously. Said it in his he he's saying. He made nois though. Not while he was sleepi he means, though he could ha Things like: "Oh, my dear. . . . darling. . . . Oh, my gosh . . ." N noises really. Just things he s aloud once everyone was gone. didn't cry, though. Doesn't kn why. He can't say he did all his c ing in the hospital after she died over the last two days or thr Memories flooded through him l crazy in the sitting room. H think some of these would h started his crying, but they did So leave it at that, for who can plain such things, and why does think they need explaining anyw And while he slept, that half hour, he also saw her doing thi she'd done before she got sick maybe he wasn't even sleep then. Early next morning—me ing, this morning, morning of day, which is still amazing to h really, still—he went to a nea restaurant for coffee and a muf Then, back at the home, he as one of the funeral directors if t provided toothbrushes and toc paste. He suspected they did, for people who stayed overnight, jus he suspected enough people sta the night beside the caskets to v rant the home getting a large su

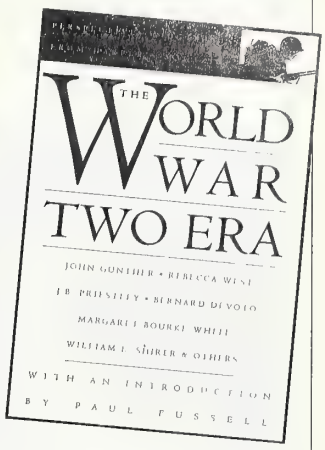
othbrushes and toothpaste, and
as right. He wanted his mouth
nell clean. He didn't want to
e the funeral any worse for
s who had to go through what
felt they had to with him, kiss-
hugging, getting their faces
. And he only had the muffin
use his stomach was growling
he didn't want to make noises
ng the service. Then he went
to the sitting room, and after
casket was wheeled into the
el, spoke a few minutes to the
iator about his wife: where and
n she was born, names of her
nts and sister, schools she at-
ed and professions she had,
like that, plus two or three
gs she used to do to entertain
elf: books, classical music,
—and at eleven or so . . . actu-
the funeral was scheduled to
at 11:15 and it did, on the dot.
awned through a lot of it, at
point during the officiator's
opening remarks found himself
ng asleep, but everyone must
have known why or could
guess.

Now he'll sleep though, for
He's home, whole thing's over.
se is his; paper's his also. He
n't, he means, have to divide it
very morning as he used to do
e she got very sick or read the
thing-but section to her when
ouldn't sit up in bed, nor from
on think of moving to another
n because of the noises she
s. He'll buy half as much food
Well, he's been doing that for
ths. "You've got to eat some-
g," he used to say, "you've got
lease, if only for me. . . . Well, if
can't, you can't, what can we
Won't buy milk because he
n't drink it; she did, at the end
e spoonful, or tried to, so most
e quarts he bought went to
. He won't buy lots of things,
ne'll throw away lots too. All
clothes; he means he'll give
away. Her catalogues. She had
hundred of them, and they'll
ming three a day maybe for the
year or two; maybe until he
s. He didn't want to tell the of-
or that reading through cata-

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NOTES FOR "SHORT ORDER"
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

MENU CLUES: 1. third degree (pun); 2. eleventh hour (pun); 3. fifth wheel; 4. second hand (two meanings); 5. tenth man; 6. first la dy (pun); 7. seventh heaven; 8. fourth estate (four-the-state); 9. twelfth night; 10. eighth note (*); 11. ninth circle; 12. (s)ixth sense (*). ACROSS: 1. win-peas (*); 9. pun; 12. t(ox)in; 13. a-Cid; 22. to-R.-ch; 23. (*); 24. pun; 29. Ga's; 31. homonym, chow; 32. (*); 33. tot-ret (rev.). DOWN: 1. two meanings; 2. I-ago; 3. E.D.-dies; 4. homonym; 5. p. [sister(*)]s.; 6. a-Rea; 7. dist.-in-Ct.; 8. yo-Ked; 10. (*); 11. reversal; 14. car(ol)ing; 16. hen-an (rev.); 17. (r)eel; 18. (p)eon; 19. c(hero)ot; 20. H(adyn)-eight; 21. homonym; 25. reversal; 26. (*); 27. (*); 28. (e)ach(e); 30. tos(s)-reversal.

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I am [illegible] years of age [illegible]

[illegible]

logues was another of her great pleasures; it just wasn't something he wanted said. "In the end they paid off, didn't they?" she said. "For it's much easier ordering by phone than trying to get me to a store." Made sense; he never argued it didn't. If he had any complaint it was she had several boxes of them in the bedroom in addition to all her medical things, so there was little space for him to maneuver around in the dark or anytime wheel her out of the room. A couple of chairs she liked and he didn't—out. Lamp he hated, some things on the walls, and of course all those medical supplies. He won't feed the birds the way she did, filling up feeders every third day and the last three months having him do it, so they'll go too but on their own. He also won't take care of her fruit trees and flower beds. He'll mow the grass only when it's absolutely necessary and water around a little if the grounds look particularly dry, but that's about it. Maybe in time he'll get rid of the house too: sell it. Move into a small apartment. But right now, or soon, sleep. He held her in his arms and said, "Now I can sleep," or one of the others. Held her up, in a sitting position, as he said. He did what he could, took care of her fairly well, did his best, is what he's saying; and that's something—nobody could argue with that, not that anyone would, so why's he bringing it up? He cooked for her, dressed her, changed her bed every other day for months, sponge-bathed her daily, gave her shampoos the hard way, with her head lowered back into a basin, and sat behind her for thirty minutes holding the hair dryer to her hair. "You know," he said, "if you cut your hair to just shoulder length, not that I want you to, it'd probably save me an hour's work a week." Took her out for air in her wheelchair. Took her to places, not just for strolls in the park or on the street—restaurants, coffee shops, public gardens, museums. Tried to make things interesting and normal for her. Got her books from libraries and bookstores, and when she could no longer read, books on tape. Who'll do their income taxes now? That'll be a problem when the time comes around for it, which [illegible] month from now, since he has [illegible] head for figures and following [illegible] ten directions and he'd hate spe[illegible] ing money on an accountant. [illegible] her when she had to be fed, n[illegible] her fresh dishes every day tho[illegible] she ate very little of them, gave [illegible] injections, cleaned her up after e[illegible] bowel movement, did a wash a[illegible] at least, sometimes pulled her in[illegible] wheelchair up ten steps, twe[illegible] once to a party four flights up[illegible] thank goodness some of the gu[illegible] helped him carry her in the c[illegible] downstairs. He did just about ev[illegible] thing, he's saying, though he's[illegible] boasting, or doesn't think h[illegible] Well, who's to boast to anyw[illegible] When he was at work he called[illegible] every hour. "How are thin[illegible] "Fine." "Feeling all right?" "Goo[illegible] can be expected." "Anyth[illegible] wrong?" "No, I'm okay." "I shou[illegible] worry?" "Don't be silly." "You're [illegible] ing better then?" "Than what[illegible] didn't mean that than, but the o[illegible] one." "I'm feeling the same." [illegible] leave here soon as I can." "D[illegible] hurry for me." "But I want to." [illegible] good, I like having you home, a[illegible] does make things easier." "See[illegible] sweetheart." "Bye, dear."

Oh, he's going to miss her[illegible] won't be able to sleep. He shou[illegible] have cut out the obit. He sh[illegible] have kept the whole page with[illegible] date on top and then done so[illegible] thing with it, not frame i[illegible] course, then what? He should [illegible] gone to a friend's house for[illegible] night. How would that have he[illegible] No, he wants to be here alone[illegible] he doesn't want to think of he[illegible] as much as he's doing. "Go[illegible] think of her, think of her, why [illegible] It's the drink. He shouldn't [illegible] anymore today. It'll make him[illegible] it's making him sad, very sad; [illegible] sad, what of it? Cry, bawl, p[illegible] the chair arms with his fist[illegible] should do what he wants or[illegible] comes, so long as it isn't des[illegible] tive. Destructive physically, is [illegible] he means. For he doesn't deser[illegible] The bawling and pounding, [illegible] saying, and who's talking abou[illegible] serve"? And he doesn't ne[illegible] drink. He's tired enough aft[illegible] most no sleep for three days [illegible]

because of the emotional thing
t he's gone through, to sleep
ight for a day without drink.
nk will probably even get him
n a few hours with a stom-
ache or just to pee. And then
p him up when he wants to
o. He hasn't had enough to eat.
okay, the drink feels good, paper
his lap feels good, he's not hun-
—it all feels pretty good, in fact;
lenly he doesn't feel so sad. He
but what's he going to do now?
ep, what else? Long and hard,
n wake up refreshed. It's going
e bad awhile, maybe a month,
be half a year, maybe more—
ably more. Well, that happens
should be expected. What's he
n by that? But start off right.
to bed, out of your clothes, get
er the covers, take the phone
he hook, and just sleep.
e goes into the bedroom. A long
n—a good sign, the best. Un-
ses and gets under the covers.
curtains, and he gets up and
es them. Back in bed. "Close
eyes," he thinks. Why did he
k that when he was holding her
ne hospital, that thing about now
an sleep? There he was, sitting
ne chair falling asleep, maybe he
fall asleep for a few minutes but
t of it? and when he looked up
looked different. So, something
it her look. Wait a minute, he
n't quite understand. He knew
d died—that's it. Sensed it,
er—something about the frozen-
of her face—and would have
n surprised if he'd touched her
found she was alive. Went up to
Felt her heart, temple, her wrist
e. Pulled her eyelids back. She
dead, he thought, or maybe just
deep coma. The deepest of co-
, much deeper than the one
d been in for the last day. The
ors had talked about a coma so
it would seem to the layman's
she was dead. Did what they
for him to do if no doctor or
e was in the room. Felt around
ankle where the pulse is. Her
was cold. Other one, too. For
last half year they'd been cold,
now they were very cold. She
dead. No, there were other
gs to do, the doctors had said.

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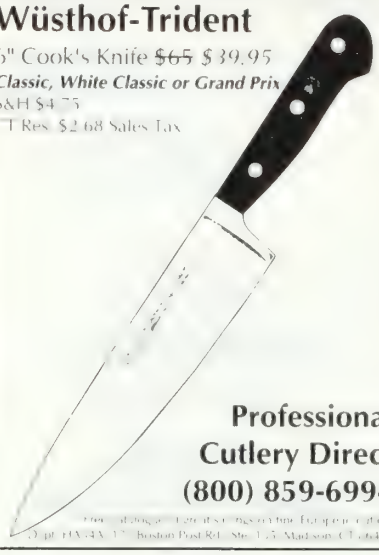
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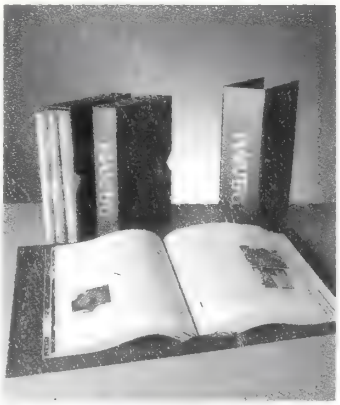


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Put his ear to her mouth, then to
nostrils. Felt her heart, temple
wrist pulse again and also her nec
he'd forgotten to feel her neck's.
was dead, that's all, he was sure
there was nothing about her
showed any life. The pin, he rem
bered one of the doctors saying,
he got it off her side table
pricked the bottom of her foot.
response. Other foot. Nothing.
eral fingertips. Same thing. That
it. She was lifeless, dead, what
could she be? "Oh no," he s
Aloud, definitely, remember
clearly. And lifted her up and
her to his chest, her chest aga
his, her face someplace and s
with his, his arms around her, an
closed his eyes, he thinks,
thought, "Now I can get to sle
"Some sleep"? "Sleep bett
"Tonight I can"? "I can sleep b
tonight"? Something like that.
necessarily one of those. But
odd. Well, it's inexcusable—ex
able, he means. For he didn't th
"Good, she's dead, now I can sl
In a way, though, he felt it, a
her being dead. All she'd g
through. It was good she didn't s
like some people with her illnes
Suffer at the end, he means. She
stopped breathing. In a coma
day or so and then just went. An
thought something about his fu
sleep soon after. Is he a bastar
having thought that? Of course
He did his best, as he said. Did
he could for her, and for years.
just think of his state of mind at
exact time. The poor dear—she
could never sleep, never s
maybe never again. That's rid
lous, but he won't sleep well or
for a while, that's for sure.
phone rings. Forgot to leave th
ceiver off the hook, or he just c
have pulled the plug out of the
It rings and rings, and he gets up
goes to it and lifts the rece
"Yes?" he says. "My darling, I'm
Where have you been, why d
you come see me?" "It's you,
says. "This is wonderful, a mir
everything I wanted, you can't
lieve how great I feel. I'll be
there wherever you are." She so
so healthy too. But he knows he
ready asleep.

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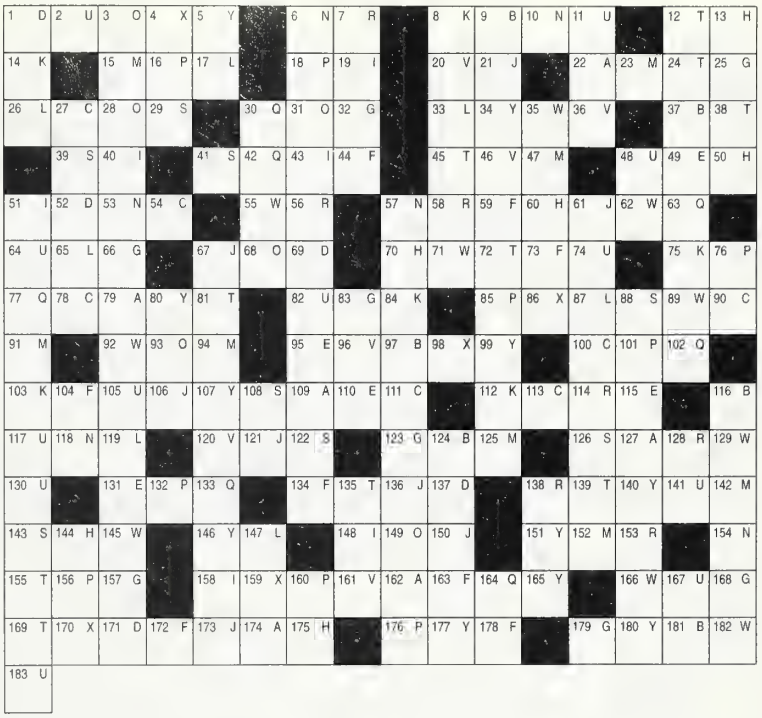
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 145

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 81.



CLUES — WORDS

A. Glutted, palled — 22 79 109 162 174 127

B. Walking purposefully — 124 116 97 37 9 181

C. Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:52) — 54 78 113 90 100 27 111

D. Angry — 171 69 52 1 137

E. Great, serious — 115 131 95 49 110

F. "I oft have wished for Hell for ____ Heaven" (2 wds.; Blake, "Grown Old in Love") — 73 59 178 44 172 104 163 134

G. Expressed grief — 66 25 179 168 83 123 157 32

H. Strong dislike, hostility — 144 13 70 60 50 175

I. Fixed routine; good time — 148 51 40 19 43 158

J. Private, hidden — 173 106 150 21 136 61 67 121

K. Became morally corrupt or offensive — 75 8 103 112 14 84

L. Process determined by chance — 65 119 26 33 147 87 17

M. Bestowed liberally or lavishly — 91 152 142 15 125 23 47 94

N. Cocktail sweetened with lime juice — 53 6 154 10 57 118

O. Irregular, rugged — 68 93 3 28 149 31

P. "His wings were wet with ranging ____" (3 wds.; Greene, "Cupid Abroad Was Lated") — 76 132 18 85 160 156 16 176 / 101

Q. Displaying no emotional involvement — 133 63 42 102 77 30 164

R. Displayed, laid open — 114 58 138 56 7 153 128

S. "Hyperion's curls, ____ of Jove himself" (2 wds., *Hamlet*) — 122 41 29 108 88 126 143 39

T. Energetic, ready, aware (3 wds.) — 155 169 135 72 139 81 45 12 / 24 38

U. Simple method of buying and selling (hyph.) — 48 105 141 2 64 117 167 183 / 82 130 74 11

V. Vice president of the U.S., 1897–99; cap. of Tasmania — 46 96 20 120 161 36

W. Withdrawal — 35 145 166 129 62 92 55 182 / 89 71

X. Manifest — 86 159 98 4 170

Y. 1938 Jeanette MacDonald–Nelson Eddy film — 107 146 165 80 177 34 5 180 / 140 151 99

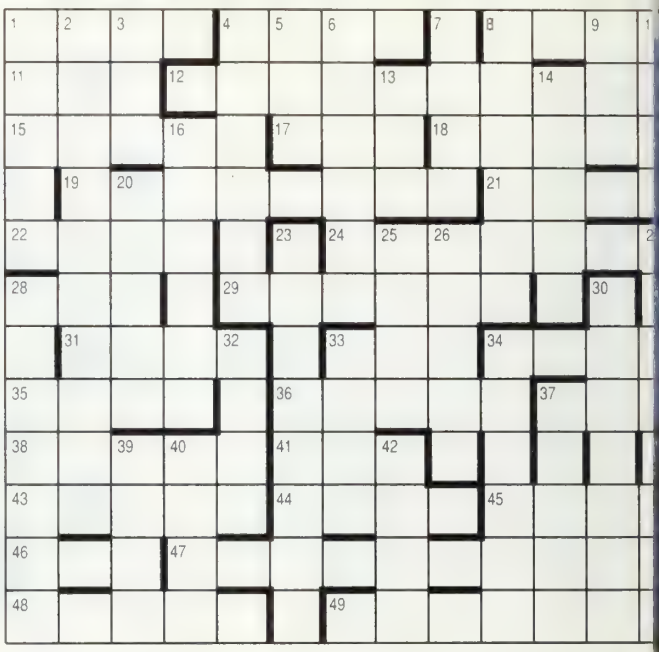
Love and Kisses

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

In the course of completing the diagram, solvers will play three games. The single winner of these games is to be entered in the space provided below the diagram.

Clue answers include six proper names, one a trade name. 24A is a variant spelling; 33A and 26D are obscure.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 81.



AND THE WINNER IS _____

ACROSS

1. Off hearing God (4)
4. Resist is going to sleep (4)
8. Fastening pinhead on the tail of bears (4)
11. Something useful (almost) in addition (3)
12. I can make Oprah grey and primarily cross; I can do it again and again (10)
15. Oily producer gets double-crossed in time (5)
17. Animal sounds from a Jew shrugging (3)
18. The alternative to contradicting a woman (5)
19. Well-educated Englishmen ring in Saxon translation (8)
21. Trumpeted—sounds pornographic (4)
22. *Downhill Racer* was first, following *The Last of the Mohicans* (4)
24. Trumpeted—having received more than one shot in the arm? (7)
28. Man in prison study (3)
29. Sounds like start of the case relative to a coffee can (6)
31. Losing barrel, gobbles leaves (4)
33. Drake's heard the principal melody of a fugue (3)
34. Droops, after doctor goes "I goofed" (4)
35. Trifles with cutback (4)
36. Process that gets rid of de tics? (5)
37. Change to a bit of fodder (3)
38. Suspicious of sounding like nonsense poetry? (5)
41. Hide something in the furniture (3)
43. Directions on copulation from *The Man Who Would Be King* (5)
44. Team participants—no bum steers here! (4)
45. The older part of container (4)
46. Back of container's lid (3)
47. We have just the ticket to fight off chills (3,7)
48. Word announces nothing (5)
49. Grooms, possibly producing less rot (7)

DOWN

1. It types things (5)
2. Various Glorias—strumpets with obscene logo across their heart (10)
3. Fish in the Sound, in parts of the canal (3)
4. Raise a sawbuck? It can curdle milk (6)
5. Energy from icebergs (3)
6. Moonlight, for example, as to an eccentric (6)
7. Wound up in love (4)
8. What boxer holds Derby placement? (6)
9. He's cross-dressed! (3)
10. Location in Happy Rest Funeral Spot (4)
13. Weapon that confuses 17 Across (3)
14. Sounds like hordes of flowers (5)
16. From among the foodless, draw lots (6)
20. Nobody times uplifting element (5)
23. Editor starts directing on fourth network in prescription for TV comedian (4,4)
25. Go up to one on the other hand (4)
26. Poison neutralizer—*Roger Rabbit* character takes ten (5
27. Fretting, died 'is hair (8)
28. Why don't we put top on pills (7)
30. What a bridge is is sort of a wrench (7)
32. "Deep River!" stays in the ear (4)
33. French pair exudes two-thirds curiosity (4)
34. Oil tax can get you in the soup (6)
37. In the bag—oh, pleasant (2,3)
39. See with second sight on the Fourth of July (4)
40. Confederates of Serb troops (4)
42. Judges freed serf (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Love and Kisses," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winners of the November puzzle, "Lapt Lights II," are Anthony R. Gallo, Glenshaw, Pennsylvania; Donald Raskin, El Paso, Texas; and David Russell Williams, Memphis, Tennessee.

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LETTERS

Class Anxieties

Much of what the late Christopher Lasch wrote in his long and distinguished career I agreed with entirely, and even when I could not agree I admired his honesty, insight, and fervor. The world of ideas will be dimmer without him. Ordinarily, it would be an honor to have my own work discussed in his final book, excerpted as his final essay, "The Revolt of the Elites" [November]. But, to my dismay, Lasch's interpretation of my work is severely at odds with my intent. The essay cites my book *The Work of Nations* and dubs me the "philosopher" of "the new American elite." It suggests that I approve of, even celebrate, the withdrawal of the country's best educated and most successful from the American commonwealth. Yet my actual goal is precisely the opposite.

Although I am reluctant to challenge an eminent thinker who cannot respond, I am even more reluctant to let stand the impression his essay might leave about my diagnosis and prescription. Simply put, what I term "the secession of the successful," and what Lasch calls "the revolt of the elites," presents a mortal threat to the American way of life. In the final line of his essay, Lasch writes that "the revolt of the elites against time-honored traditions of locality, obligation, and restraint may yet unleash a war of all against all." Exactly. As labor secretary, I have warned that America's middle class is splintering into three new groups: an *underclass* largely trapped in center cities, increasingly isolated from the core economy; an *overclass* of those who are positioned to ride profitably the waves of change; and in between, the largest group, an *anxious class*, most of whom hold a job but are justifiably uneasy about their own standing and fearful for their children's future.

What divides these three fragments of the old middle class is the quality of their formal education and their capacity and opportunity to learn throughout their working life. Skills have always been relevant to earnings, of course. But skills have never been as important as they are today. They now determine where the fundamental fault line runs through the American workforce. Lasch perceives the importance of this fault line but, I submit, misreads some of its contours and misgauges the average worker's odds of crossing this divide.

It is undeniable that, by whatever measure (income, unemployment risk, pension benefits, or health insurance), the workforce has become starkly separated over the last two decades. Well-educated workers have generally improved their lot while less well-educated workers have suffered a precipitous drop in living standard. Lasch justifiably laments one of the consequences of this divide: the increasing physical separation of Americans. The overclass has moved to elite suburbs—occasionally into their own gated communities or residential compounds policed by their own security force. The uncer-

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ss finds itself quarantined in surndings that are often unspeakably ak and violent. And the anxious ss is trapped, too, not only by ıses and apartments that are often small for growing families but alby the frenzy of effort it takes to serve their standing now that ny families need two or three payecks to deliver the standard of liv- one job used to supply.

n other words, even as America's nomic tide continues to rise, it no ger lifts us all. This core argument mates *The Work of Nations* and reorces its conclusion that our coun- s greatest challenge is "to improve living standards of the majority Americans . . . who are losing ound in the global economy." I me to Washington precisely to adıce that goal, making all the more nful Lasch's suggestion that as secary of labor I am content merely preside over "the one category of ployment ('routine production') at has no future at all." The mise that there is 'no future' for majority of America's workers is ellent and, fortunately, at odds h the facts. The economy that is w emerging is not simply a shrink- or re-sorting of the old economy , rather, a fundamental re-formaı rich with new opportunities and w paths into the middle class.

When nations are wise and ky—as America has been for most its history—an implicit social npact knits together business sucs, rising living standards, and insive politics. But the erosion of old middle class poses a threat to bargain that has paid off so well so many American citizens and nerican companies.

In order to revive America's sense shared destiny, we need to restore e connections between the two fining national traditions of free terprise and middle-class prosperi- We need to renew the compact ong American businesses, Ameriı government, and American rking men and women. Individu- must face the realities of the new nomy, and ensure that they and ir children have the basic intelctual tools to prosper in it. Business ıst invest in its workers, both because a skilled and flexible workforce is the key source of competitive advantage and because the widening gaps in our society clearly imperil business as well. And government must clear away the obstacles that clutter the path to opportunity.

This administration is engaged in resolving the problems Lasch so eloquently details in his essay. Were Lasch still with us, he might argue that the centrifugal forces that are pulling America apart call for still more radical remedies. That may be. But I hope he would also agree that the goal is within our grasp, that it is possible to build a new middle class and a new ladder into it for the underclass. Redoubling our energies in pursuit of this goal and reaffirming that no task is more essential to our future are fitting practical monuments to Lasch's memory.

Robert B. Reich, Secretary of Labor
Washington, D.C.

Under the Surface of Whitewater

Editor's note: "Fool for Scandal: How the New York Times *Got Whitewater Wrong" (October 1994), by Gene Lyons, prompted a spirited response by readers and became the basis of a forum held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and broadcast on C-Span. The following letter was sent by Joseph Lelyveld, the executive editor of the* New York Times, *to a* Times *reader, who then sent a copy to the editors of* Harper's Magazine. *With the permission of the* New York Times, *we have reprinted the letter below.*

We too have read the Gene Lyons story in *Harper's Magazine* and seen the forum on C-Span, and I have to tell you that our faith in Jeff Gerth, our reporter, and our coverage of the Whitewater affair has not been shaken in the least. The Lyons article is full of egregious misrepresentations of our coverage, not to mention our intent. It is wild and shoddy journalism, and I am sorry you appear to be persuaded by it.

Let me go back to the basic facts of our coverage. It did not turn on a suggestion that the Clintons did

Continued on page 76

POETRY:
The Unsayable Said

In the act of reading,
we exercise or practice
emotion, griefs and joys,
erotic transport and
the anguish of loss – as if poems
were academies of feeling,
as if in reading poems
we practiced emotion and
understanding
of emotion.
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NOTEBOOK

Traveler's tale

By Lewis H. Lapham

All things are artificial, for nature is the art of God.

—Sir Thomas Browne

Three days before Christmas last year, on an afternoon train from New Haven to New York, I found myself sitting opposite a woebegone young man in his late twenties who seemed so alarmed by the direction of his own thoughts that I was reluctant to unsettle him further with a careless remark about Newt Gingrich or the weather. I took him to be a student in one of the Yale graduate schools, but by his appearance I couldn't guess at the topic of either his dissertation or his unhappiness. He was wearing blue jeans, a worn but once well-tailored overcoat, and the remnant of a gray cashmere sweater. His round and naturally pleasant face was gaunt and drawn, and although the melancholy expression in his eyes suggested the possibility of an unpublished poet, he could just as easily have been studying law or architecture.

We were among the few passengers in an unheated car, and during the first twenty minutes of the journey he stared absently out the window at the rain, his hands thrust dejectedly into the pockets of his coat. When at last he chose to speak, he didn't turn his head. The obliqueness of the statement surprised me less than its hollow tone.

"You know, of course," he said, "what they can do to mice."

I didn't know—either which they or what mice—but I understood that my companion had been asking himself a series of questions for which he had found no good answers and that his observation followed from a dismal line of reasoning that he no longer could suppress.

"It's Christmas," I said. "The end of the year. The *fin de siècle*. Everybody's depressed."

He ignored the remark as an irrelevance, and as he shifted the angle of his gaze, I could see that he was calculating the precise degree of my probable ignorance.

"Have you ever heard the term 'germ-line cell therapy'?" he asked. "Do you know how many thousands of human embryos are lying around in cold storage?"

I said that I had heard rumors about the human embryos but had assumed that most of them were harmless. The young man regarded me with a superior smile, as if from a cold and condescending height. Identifying himself as a doctoral candidate at the Yale Divinity School, he asked me whether I had noticed either of the two reports published on the front page of the *New York Times* within the space of the last six weeks, one of them about experiments with the sperm cells of mice at the University of Pennsylvania, the other about a mouse inflated with a gene causing it to become grotesquely obese. I remembered the photograph of the fat mouse, which had a bow around its neck and looked to be about the size of a pet rabbit.

"If they can eliminate the gene for obesity," he said, "it's only a matter of time before they can eliminate the gene for sloth."

Before the train reached Bridgeport he had informed me that the news in the biomedical sciences was by no means good. He had been diligently collecting journal articles about transgenic fish and children born to their grandmothers, als[o] newspaper dispatches about the m[o]lecular rearrangement of cows and [c]nosaurs soon to be hatched from o[ld] rocks. The new biological world o[f] der, he said, was much nearer in tim[e] than anybody supposed. Becomi[ng] suddenly animated and beginning [to] wave his hands, he lurched into [a] projection of the life forms likely [to] inhabit the next millennium.

"Synthetic salmon as big as kill[er] whales, my friend. Huge and omni[vo]rous creatures devouring all th[e] minor fish in the Gulf of Alask[a]. Mutant tomatoes as round as baske[t] balls. Insects in the shape of par[a]keets. Chickens crossed with rats [by] Quentin Tarantino."

Apparently what troubled hi[m] was the prospect of a world fro[m] which all traces of human imperfe[c]tion had been removed, like mud [on] a boot or stains on a rug. Who th[ey] would have need of his services? [Or] what use was the Old or New Test[a]ment among people bred to the d[e]sign specifications of Steven Spi[el]berg or the Walt Disney Company?

"Perhaps you can explain to m[e]," he said, "the point of preaching se[r]mons to people who look like Yo[u] and know nothing of sin and r[e]morse."

"Journalists like to write abo[ut] miracles," I said. "They exaggera[te] things."

The young man dismissed the c[o]jection with an abrupt and imp[a]tient gesture, and between Bridg[e]port and Darien he summed up t[he] result of his research in so rapid a rush of words that I had troub[le] keeping track of the distinctions b[e]tween "xeno-grafts" and "t[he] genome project," between the "po[ly]merase chain reaction" and Cer[n]

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zoic insects preserved in beads of amber. Other passengers came and went, but the divinity student took no notice of them, and he never once was at a loss for another terrible sign or portent looming just below the biomedical horizon. In the station at Stamford he mentioned the two hundred genetically engineered organisms released into the environment over the last ten years (all of them suspect and some of them missing), and passing through Cos Cob he mocked the pretensions of literary theorists.

"At Yale," he said, "people think deconstruction is something that happens in the English department." And then, with scornful laughter, "Guys in beards writing commentaries about Proust. They think of themselves as revolutionaries."

But it is the cellular biologists, he said, who revise the texts of human meaning, adding or deleting gene sequences like semicolons. By the time the train entered Westchester County, the divinity student had worked himself into so agitated a state of mind, part despairing prophecy and part antic improvisation, that he had attracted the respectful attention of three teenage girls wearing red woolen caps that made them look like Christmas elves. The apocalyptic tenor of his remarks followed from his assumption that within a matter of not too many years the wonders of corporate science would bring forth a market in genetic home improvements (intelligence, skin color, athletic ability, etc.) as profitable as the market in cosmetics.

"If I can give my dog blue eyes and a dancer's feet," he said, "why can't I do the same for my daughter?"

As long ago as February 1993, he said, the United States government approved the patenting of new life forms, and by so doing granted genetic engineers the right to own specific traits and characteristics. The Patent Office's ruling pertained to animals, but in view of the 1980 Supreme Court decision that the patent laws refer to "anything under the sun made by man," the divinity student foresaw the arrival of the biomedically engineered Eden in three stages, all of them brief.

First, the deployment of the genetic codes to fend off hereditary diseases. Identify the gene for obesity or breast cancer, remove it from the embryo, and thus preserve the child from at least one of the scourges of the flesh.

Next and not long afterward, the molecular biologies made to serve the pleasures of the rich. Philip II of Spain collected dwarfs, and what was to prevent the latter-day lords of creation—Michael Jackson, say, or Matsushita, or Bill Gates—from collecting centaurs or two-headed golfers or miniature reproductions of Henry Kissinger? The divinity student could imagine private zoos in Colorado; limited editions issued by the Franklin Mint; bizarre auctions under the chandeliers at Sotheby's.

Last, once the techniques had become both reliable and cheap, the better drug- and department stores selling celebrity-sponsored sperm cells as if they were shades of lipstick. The masculine and feminine ideals of beauty no longer would need to be left to chance, and instead of taking up the questions of faith and conscience, people would graze like sheep among the displays of attractively designed tubes, priced at $49.95 and filled with genetic reprints of Elizabeth Taylor's eyes or Frank Sinatra's voice.

"Who will want to listen to the word of God," he said, "when they can change themselves into whales or movie stars?" The three girls looked at him in amazement, obviously thrilled with the news of their deliverance.

At the station in New Rochelle the train stopped for nearly ten minutes, and the young man fell abruptly silent. His long exigesis apparently had exhausted him without relieving him of his depression. He stared bleakly at the passengers crowding through the doors, most of them noisily excited with the hope of a festive evening in the city, and I wondered what I could say to him that might bring him some small measure of holiday cheer.

He was undoubtedly overstating the speed of scientific advancements (as well as confusing t practice of genetics with the the of eugenics), but if I was sure th the new biomedical dispensati would arrive at a much later da than he supposed, I was also su that on his principal existenti point his fears were well found The pitiless logic of the capital m kets eventually would overrule t moral objections from the sen mentalists in the choir loft. T Pope and Pat Buchanan might r against the blasphemy of comm cial mutation, but the bioengine ing industries already have invest as much as $30 billion toward t manufacture of improved hum beings, and too much money sta to be made from the sale of a hea shaped mouth or a longer life.

If I couldn't comfort the divin student with psalms, at least I co console him with assurances ab the vanity and greed of his fell man. I remembered that the Y Divinity School had been foun in a very strict and Puritan tra tion, and the faculty possibly h neglected to introduce the yo man to the writings of the more s donic authors. I suspected that had read too much of Thom Aquinas and not enough Voltaire; too much Martin Bu and John Bunyan, not enough M Twain and Ambrose Bierce.

"Have faith in Mammon," I s "and trust to the quibbling of l yers. Rely on the c ardice of politicians."

The train slowed down for passage through the urban ruin the South Bronx, and I explai that whereas the devil offered F knowledge and power in return his soul, the modern corporati would offer traits and characteris for a percentage of the gross that, with any luck, the laws would last a thousand years.

The trace of an approving s flickered briefly at the corner the divinity student's mouth, then he thought of the numbe charlatans unable to resist temptation of promising biolog utopia, probably not much diffe in its landscape of good behav

n the one envisioned by the Re-
olican signers of the Contract
h America—Sunday school rows
obedient citizens, all of them
meless and most of them blond,
ne of them committing crimes,
body telling lies.
I can hear the speeches," he said.
o more racial hatred. No more cit-
ns physically or intellectually chal-
ged. An end to war and aggres-
n, and literacy furnished at birth.
lcome to the New Jerusalem."
assured him that even the
ristian Coalition would come to
senses and everyone would re-
mber that the end of war is also
end of finance capitalism, that
relieving the human race of its
pidity and grief, the apostles of
rlasting happiness also would be
cting themselves from the office
Washington and the pulpit in
m Springs.
The young man frowned, still wor-
d about the lack of souls to save,
I again assured him that although
body could afford to put the propo-
on quite so plainly, a consensus of
country's best and most respect-
e opinion would discover that an
ess of virtue debases the currency
free will and subverts the mean-
of the Constitution. The train
s on the railroad bridge crossing
East River into Queens, and out
windows to the west we could
the triumphant Manhattan sky-
e glittering in the dusk.
"Of what else is the city made," I
d, "except the sins of mankind?"
Without avarice, I said, what
uld become of Wall Street? De-
ve a broker of his inalienable
ht to insider trading, and the
rket would empty of both buyers
d sellers. Without lust, what
uld happen to the news and en-
tainment media? The few re-
ining journalists would be re-
ced to making lists of yesterday's
mperature readings. Without
ath, who would go to see Steven
agal movies or the Super Bowl?
ithout pride, what hairdresser
uld survive an afternoon's ap-
ntments? What tailor could sell
other suit? Delete the stain of en-
from the national genome, and
entire apparatus of the Ameri-
can economy—the glory of its markets and the grandeur of its laws, the whole magnificent edifice of steel and glass and neon light—would crumble as surely into dust as the colossal wreck of Troy.

"It would never do, you see," I said. "Human perfection is the ruin of the state."

In Pennsylvania Station a Salvation Army band was playing "Joy to the World." The young man walked with me toward Seventh Avenue, both of us pushing against the current of the holiday crowd festooned with shopping bags from Tiffany's and Bloomingdale's and The Gap. But in all that vast throng of wayward souls, hurrying home to Christmas and the suburbs, bearing overpriced gifts and long lists of New Year's promises they already knew they couldn't keep, I noticed very few who didn't look to be angry or tired or late. Reminded of the vanity of human wishes and the heavy burden of human sorrow wrapped up in so many red and green ribbons, I clapped the student on the back and told him to take heart, rejoice in the spirit of the season, and know that he saw before him a lifetime guarantee of steady work.

"Fear not," I said. "Even if by some mischance Bristol-Myers Squibb isolates the gene for peace on earth and goodwill toward men, the poor couldn't afford it and the rich would want something more amusing."

The young man almost smiled—not as yet a broad smile, not a smile that anybody would associate with Santa Claus or think to put on a Hallmark Card, but nonetheless a brighter expression than the one with which he had boarded the train in New Haven. In the distance I could hear the Salvation Army trumpet taking up the tune of "Good King Wenceslaus," and as the divinity student walked off into the traffic and the rain changing to snow, I thought I noticed a stronger set to his shoulders, as if somehow it had occurred to him that toy mice and the futures market both bear witness to the art of God. ■

THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF WHITEWATER

A symposium sponsored by Harper's Magazine

National Press Club, October 25, 1994

In the October 1994 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Gene Lyons's article "Fool for Scandal: How the *New York Times* Got Whitewater Wrong" examined the *New York Times*'s Whitewater reporting, which began with a March 8, 1992, story by Jeff Gerth. Lyons revealed a pattern of selective reporting, inaccuracies, fact suppression, and misleading innuendo in the *Times*'s coverage of the Whitewater affair.

Lyons and other prominent journalists debated the issues raised by Lyons's piece in a *Harper's*-sponsored symposium held at the National Press Club on October 25, 1994. The *Times* declined to send a representative.

Participants:

Lewis H. Lapham (Moderator)
Harper's Magazine

Gene Lyons
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Stan Crock
Business Week

Tom Hamburger
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

John Camp
CNN

Trudy Lieberman
Columbia Journalism Review

Brian Duffy
U.S. News & World Report

Jeff Birnbaum
Wall Street Journal

Symposium transcript, $10; Whitewater issue, $6.50 (U.S.). Send orders to: *Harper's Magazine*, Dept. Whitewater, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.



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HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of American households whose income taxes have been cut since 1992 to those whose have been raised : 10:1

umber of special-interest tax breaks the new House Ways and Means Committee chairman says he plans to eliminate : 0

Percentage of Americans who favor cutting spending on "government programs for poor children" : 9

Percentage who favor cutting spending on "welfare" : 48

Chances that a welfare recipient is too young to vote : 2 in 3

Chances that a Social Security recipient is : 1 in 100

Last year in which the poverty rate of U.S. children equaled that of 1993 : 1964

Average amount of fat consumed by an American adult each week, expressed in sticks of butter : 6

Percentage of the world's wealth accounted for by the poorest 26 countries : 1.4

Portion of the world's population that lives in industrialized countries : 1/5

Portion in 1950 : 1/3

Percentage change, since 1950, in the annual number of goods and services purchased by a U.S. household : +100

Number of GATT signatories that have been cited by the U.S. government for lax child-labor-law enforcement : 39

Percentage of U.S. children who are covered by Medicaid : 24

Percentage of U.S. pediatricians who do not accept Medicaid : 23

Ratio of the average annual income of a male physician to that of a female physician : 3:2

Chances that an American will undergo invasive surgery this year : 1 in 8

Percentage of ob/gyn chief residents graduating each year who have never performed a first-trimester abortion : 47

Number of the thirteen physicians running for Congress last year who won : 5

atio of the number of years actor Fred Grandy served in Congress to the number of years he appeared on *Love Boat* : 8:9

Number of times the word "tsunami" appeared in the *New York Times* in the month following last fall's elections : 14

Year in which newly elected Congressman Sonny Bono first registered to vote : 1987

Year in which eunuchs won the right to vote in India : 1994

Percentage of Britons who say John Major's Conservative Party seems "very sleazy and disreputable" : 73

Ratio of the number of Britons who blame Prince Charles for his failed marriage to the number blaming Diana : 5:1

Number of Russians who have signed a petition to restore the country's monarchy : 800,000

Number of the 15 former Soviet republics whose national legislatures are dominated by ex-Communists : 11

Tons of plutonium scheduled to be removed from nuclear warheads worldwide by the year 2004 : 100

Tons of plutonium that U.S. and Russian nuclear-power plants will have produced by then : 230

Average number of land mines planted each day last year, worldwide : 5,479

Sales of Tupperware through TuppNet since it was introduced on the Internet last March : $1,300

Percentage of American adults who say they have "never heard of the Internet" : 58

Number of times Walter Cronkite has attended a Grateful Dead concert : 2

Number of marijuana plants for which a grower may be sentenced to death under the crime bill passed last fall : 60,000

Total amount the U.S. government earned last year through the auctioning of Aldrich Ames's possessions : $36,400

Rank of General Norman Schwarzkopf, among the highest scorers on *Celebrity Jeopardy!* last November : 1

rcentage of Americans who believe that George Washington would be disappointed in the federal government today : 86

Rank of Lincoln, Clinton, and Nixon, among U.S. presidents elected by the lowest percentage of voters : 1,2,3

Amount Lyndon LaRouche has collected in contributions for his 1996 presidential campaign : $2,180,730

Figures cited are the latest available as of December 1994. Sources are listed on page 80.
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READINGS

[Essay]

BOSNIA'S FALL, OUR FAILURE

From Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West, *by David Rieff, to be published next month by Simon & Schuster. Rieff is a contributing editor of* Harper's Magazine; *his essay "German Hatred (of Germans)" appeared in the May 1994 issue.*

The failure, last November, of the United Nations forces on the ground in Bosnia to protect the Bihać pocket, an enclave controlled by the Bosnian Muslims that was one of the six UN-designated "safe areas," probably should not have surprised the Bosnian government, but it did. To most outsiders, it had long been clear that the only thing the UN was resolute about was preventing the use of force—whether by its own troops or by NATO—against the Bosnian Serbs. After the UN stood by and, at times, stopped NATO from acting forcefully during Serb assaults on Gorazde and Srebrenica, two other Muslim-controlled safe areas that the Serbs left helpless and defanged, the UN's stance during the Bihać crisis should have been predictable to everyone, especially the Bosnians.

But no matter how often UN officials reiterated publicly and privately that UN troops in Bosnia would intervene only "to protect humanitarian activities during wartime," ordinary Bosnians could never quite get it into their heads that the officials really meant it. The UN was supposed to be more moral than the most enlightened government, and every Bosnian could see that what was going on was patently immoral.

The UN was supposed to stand for peace; its representatives insisted that it did. In every UN office in Bosnia there was a leaflet for children entitled "What the United Nations Does for Peace." "UNPROFOR," it claimed, "is a big group of people from a lot of different countries who have come to the former Yugoslavia to try to stop the war. UNPROFOR stands for United Nations Protection Force. It tries to protect people from getting hurt in the fighting, just like a teacher who stops bullies from hitting you at school." In the world of this brochure, there was no talk of "mandates" or "limitations."

It is no wonder that the Bosnians preferred the brochure's message to the official line delivered at press conferences. The words of the UN leaflet might be childishly simple, but so, to Bosnians, was their situation. That the UN would just stand by and observe was unthinkable, despite all the official statements. The fact that most UN officials were willing to admit that what had befallen Bosnia was, indeed, a genocide only strengthened the Bosnians' faith. When they heard this admission, but then also heard that the UN had no mandate to do anything about it, they took the acknowledgment of the crime more seriously than the institutional caveat. Sooner or later, they concluded, the United Nations would come to its senses.

There is a Talmudic expression that goes, "It is your obligation to tell people things they can hear; it is your obligation not to tell people things they cannot hear." That they should stop believing in the UN, as so many foreigners—including UN officials—told them, was something many Bosnians were not prepared to listen to, even after two years of slaughter. Many could not listen because it would have meant acknowledging that their futures were hopeless. Many others could not listen because in the Tito period they had so idealized the

West that they could not imagine it would betray them.

The more basic difficulty, however, was that if most Bosnians had believed in 1992, and if many still hoped in 1994, that they would be rescued by an international force, it was because they thought they *deserved* to be rescued. Perhaps all victimized peoples the world over feel this, but what made the Bosnians different from the Afghans or the Rwandans was that their comfortable prewar lives had inculcated in them the assumption that what they deserved they would also get. The Bosnian government had imagined that if it could only make the Bosnian case eloquently enough, stir up enough public outrage in the West, then the great powers, the United States in particular, would eventually be forced to intervene. "Perhaps I am just a Balkan fool," the filmmaker Ademir Kenović, who is not naive either personally or politically, once remarked, "but no matter how long this goes on, I cannot accept that the world will just stand by as we are all massacred."

What Bosnians of all stripes seemed unable to consider was the thought that nobody cared. If the West was afraid of the Serbs, or morally soft, as Bosnian president Alija Izetbegović seemed to believe, that at least was comprehensible. What was unbearable to Sarajevans was the explanation that, far from having led to a moral softening, fifty years of prosperity had made the West immorally hard, and that if there was no intervention in Bosnia, it was because the Western powers did not care enough about Bosnia's fate to sacrifice the lives of even a few of its soldiers.

Many United Nations officials, convinced that there had never been the slightest possibility of Western military intervention, believed that Bosnia's foreign supporters—the journalists, in particular—had done great harm in fostering these illusions. It was not so much what was said to the Bosnians. Rather, some UN people insisted, by making it politically unpalatable for the American government to declare once and for all that there would never be intervention, and by keeping popular indignation alive in Western Europe, particularly in France, the journalists had fostered false hopes and abetted the Bosnian authorities in a reading of the political situation that was fundamentally misguided. What would have done more to relieve the suffering of the Bosnian people, a senior UNPROFOR civilian official once remarked to me, was a stern public declaration by the Americans that they weren't coming, ever. Instead, the Clinton Administration continued until well into the spring of 1994 to hold out the hope of intervention. And when in November the White House finally abandoned its tough talk, bowing to European pressure and worries about U.S.-Russian relations, the incoming Republican congressional leadership began to speak of using force in words eerily reminiscent of the rhetoric used by Clinton during his 1992 campaign.

If, as seems increasingly likely in retrospect, Washington was insincere about intervention from the start, rather than simply having been confused or incompetent, then President Clinton and his advisers have almost as much Bosnian blood on their hands as has Serbian

[Suggestions]

SKINNING CATS, NONVIOLENTLY

From a list of "violent" or "militaristic" phrases and suggested alternatives, in "Nonviolent Language," a brochure for Canadian teachers, published by the North York Women Teachers' Association, in Ontario. The brochure advises teachers to replace common expressions that might "arouse violent images" with "'catchy' nonviolent alternatives."

VIOLENT PHRASE	ALTERNATIVE
Kill two birds with one stone	Get two for the price of one
There's more than one way to skin a cat	There are different ways to solve a problem
Take a stab at it	Go for it!
Get away with murder	Avoid consequences
It's an uphill battle	It's next to impossible
You're dead meat	You're in serious trouble
Kick it around	Consider the options
That's a low blow	That's outside the rules
Hit them where it hurts	Find their vulnerability
Crash the party	Show up anyway
Shoot yourself in the foot	Undermine your own position
Hit the computer key	Press the computer key
Blown out of the water	Reduced to nothing



CATHERINE EDELMAN GALLERY, CHICAGO

"Treadwell, NY," by Andrea Modica. The photograph will appear in Treadwell, *to be published by Chronicle Books next year. Modica lives in Oneonta, New York.*

commander General Mladić. It was the prospect that military aid would eventually materialize that, time and again, stiffened the Bosnian government's resolve to fight on. And if one were to judge by the rhetoric coming out of Washington, it would have been hard to conclude that Western military strikes against the Serbs had been ruled out. There were brief periods between 1992 and 1994 when it looked as if the United States were gearing up either to act unilaterally or to pressure its allies to endorse a NATO military intervention. Bosnians were treated to the spectacle of flying visits by American NATO generals and the arrival of the press en masse at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo, sent by editors who apparently expected the bombs to fall at any moment. The old hands might affect cynicism, but even they would be on edge for a few days. In this atmosphere, it was difficult even for Bosnians who had finally accepted the painful conclusion that no one from abroad was going to help to go on believing that they were to be left to their fate.

The West's reluctance to intervene in Bosnia was bolstered by military planners who kept insisting on the difficulty of doing anything to thwart the Bosnian Serbs short of all-out war. Listening to UN press officers in Sarajevo and Zagreb, and to defense analysts in London and Paris, it was hard not to feel that the more the Bosnian Serbs humiliated UNPROFOR, the more Western military people came to admire them. The way briefings seemed to lean toward discussions of what fine country Bosnia made for guerrilla fighting, how easy it would be for the Serbs to pin down columns of armor on its switchback roads, and how the Serbs had a tradition of this kind of fighting dating back to World War II only loaded a deck that was already stacked against helping the Bosnians.

Yet there was at least as much evidence to support the view that the Serbs were extremely vulnerable to NATO air strikes, and that some of them knew it, as there was to assume that such attacks would have little effect on either the military disposition or the morale of the Serb forces. Senior American and Western European officers kept saying, accurately enough, that no war had ever been won from the air—the implication being that if NATO remained unwilling to commit ground troops, there was no purpose served in starting an air campaign. But such a mission would not have

been intended to defeat the Serbs completely but rather to hurt their morale, destroy a lot of their weapons, and get the kind of equipment to the Bosnians that they needed in order to force General Mladić and his subordinates to reconsider the wisdom of continuing their campaign. Such a strategy might or might not have been costly—certainly it was wishful thinking on the part of many supporters of the Bosnian cause to have insisted that it would have been cost-free—but for most of the war at least it was entirely within the powers of NATO to execute.

For most of the period in which Sarajevo lay under siege, neither ordinary Serbian soldiers nor their commanders seemed to believe that the West would ever summon the will to move against them. When one visited their emplacements, the mood was one of boredom, not embattlement. Soldiers talked about shooting down any NATO or American plane that dared to attack them and occasionally showed off their shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles for the cameras, but from their tone it was clear that they believed no such attacks would be forthcoming. What in Washington was already being called "the Mogadishu effect" had made its way to the mountains of Bosnia. "You think the American public was upset when eighteen of your soldiers were killed in Africa," a Bosnian Serb official once boasted. "Wait until the coffins start coming back from Bosnia. You are not a strong nation anymore. You cannot stand the idea of your children dying."

Nonetheless, every so often the mood would change and it would look for a time as if the Americans really were about to strike. And whenever there were such seemingly credible threats, the Serbs would back down. Suddenly the same officials who had boasted of Serbian invincibility would start musing over the Serbian vocation for martyrdom. They would move from triumphalist hectoring to plaintive demands in which they would ask why foreign journalists so totally misunderstood the Serbs and so viciously misrepresented their goals. "You must help us bring peace," Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić once said, at a particularly tense moment, to CNN's Christiane Amanpour. The Serbs, he would say, only wanted to live in peace, had long wanted to stop fighting, and only demanded the right to live among like-minded people, "like West Virginia not wanting to be part of the Confederacy during *your* Civil War."

More important, whenever the Serbian leadership began to fear that it had gone too far, that by some particular bit of bloodthirsty behavior it really might have pushed the West into action, it responded by suddenly permitting all kinds of UN humanitarian aid to get through. Whether it was freeing the relief supplies bottled up at the Sarajevo airport, or letting aid convoys move easily through Bosnian Serb Army checkpoints toward besieged areas in north-central Bosnia, or, as in the case of Sarajevo in February 1994 and Gorazde in

[Anecdote]

THE AVANT-GARDE AT THE AIRPORT

From The Ugly One with the Jewels and Other Stories, *a spoken-word album by Laurie Anderson to be released next month by Warner Bros. The text of this piece appears in Anderson's book* Stories from the Nerve Bible, *published by HarperPerennial.*

During the Gulf War I was traveling around Europe with a lot of equipment, and all the airports were full of security guards who would suddenly point to a suitcase and start yelling, "WHOSEBAGISTHIS? I want to know right now who owns this bag!" and huge groups of passengers would start fanning out from the bag, just running around in circles as if a Scud missile were on its way in.

I was carrying a lot of electronics, so I had to keep unpacking everything and plugging it in and demonstrating how it all worked, and I guess it did seem a little fishy—a lot of this stuff wakes up displaying LED readouts that have names like "Atom Smasher"—and so it took a while to convince them that it wasn't some kind of portable espionage system.

I've done quite a few of these sort of impromptu new-music concerts for small groups of detectives and customs agents. I'd have to set all this stuff up, and they'd listen for a while and then say, "So what's this?" and I'd pull out something like a voice filter and say into it, "This is what I like to think of as the voice of authority." I would tell them how I used it for songs that were about various forms of control, and they would say:

"Now, why would you want to talk like that?"

And I'd look around at the SWAT teams and undercover agents and dogs and the radio in the corner tuned to Super Bowl coverage of the war and I'd say:

"Take a wild guess."



From a series of photographs, by Alex Tehrani, of a residential treatment center in Tarara, Cuba, for children from Ukraine who have radiation-related illnesses or birth defects caused by the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear-power plant in 1986. In 1989, the Soviet Union made an international appeal for help in caring for such children; since then, Cuba has taken in 12,000 victims. The girl pictured above, age five, suffers from stomach cancer. Some of Tehrani's Tarara photographs appeared in the November 1994 issue of The Progressive.

April 1994, withdrawing heavy guns from a NATO-proclaimed exclusion zone, the Serbs gave every evidence not only of fearing air strikes more than they said they did but of believing in their effectiveness far more than UN military officials did themselves. From a position of complete intransigence, they would suddenly become so cooperative, often within a day, that an unschooled visitor might have wondered what all the fuss was about.

But then the attention of the world shifted away from the Bosnian slaughter, the pressure from Western publics on their governments to lean on the Serbs receded, and the screws were tightened again. The convoys stopped getting through. The relief supplies at the Sarajevo airport were not permitted to pass. In the villages cut off from aid, hunger began to mount again, the hospitals ran out of supplies again, and the world, once more happily relieved of the burden of its indignation over what was happening in Bosnia, turned its collective face away as the Serbs, more emboldened than ever, renewed their onslaught against those last bits of Bosnia they coveted but had not yet conquered.

To many observers, the Serbs' assault on the Bihać pocket was the harbinger of war without end. It drove the American government, theretofore the Bosnians' staunchest allies, into the arms of the British and French governments, who were by then all but openly agitating for a Serb victory as the only way to end the slaughter. Bihać also offered an especially bleak lesson in the UN's helplessness and its resolve to avoid conflict with the Serbs, even if that meant continuing to oppose NATO military action at a moment when it was UNPROFOR military personnel whom the Serbs were shooting at and taking as hostages. The Serbs had long understood that the UN would go to almost any length to placate them, and during the Bihać crisis they exploited that knowledge brilliantly. In a sense, the Serbs understood the UN better than the UN understood itself.

Of course, had the collective world security system that the UN claimed to embody really existed, then Bihać would not have suffered the fate it did. But the world's surprise at Bihać's fate testified more to its amnesia than to anything else. Bihać only recapitulated, for those who cared to remember, the same pattern of Serb restlessness, Bosnian helplessness, and international cowardice that had led to the fall of Gorazde and Srebenica, and, indeed, to the ethnic cleansing of the 70 percent of Bosnia the Serbs had seized since the beginning of the fighting, in 1992.

The true horror lay in the fact that all this had taken place in the full view of the international community. It was as if there had been television cameras in the Warsaw Ghetto and at Auschwitz, and generals and diplomats in the employ of the League of Nations insisting that the peace process had to be "given time to work." In the future, no one would be able to claim, as many Germans had legitimately claimed about the Holocaust after World War II, that they had not known about the genocide. "Never again," that post-Holocaust bromide that had been so consoling to enlightened Western Europeans and North Americans in the wake of the Holocaust, was exposed as empty sentiment. At the exact moment that President Clinton uttered "Never again" at the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington in April 1993, the holocaust of the Bosnian Muslims was continuing, with his full knowledge. His words were literally meaningless.

"Never again" was just a well-meaning dream. But a lot of dreams have died in Bosnia during the past two and a half years: the dream that the world has a conscience; the dream that Europe is a civilized place; the dream that there is justice in the world for the weak as well as for the strong. It should come as no surprise that the old millenarian dream that the truth will set us free should die there as well.

In the name of containing the Bosnian crisis, the Western powers, France and Britain in particular, connived a Serb victory. And out of bureaucratic timidity, and in the name of modalities of peacekeeping that had no possible relevance to Bosnia, the United Nations, founded in the wake of the genocide of European Jewry, became an accomplice to the genocide of the Bosnian Muslims.

[Regulations]

PRISON RULES, IN BLACK AND WHITE

From a memo issued last May to staff at California's Calipatria State Prison, outlining a new policy on inmate privileges. According to prison officials, the policy, which was in effect for three months, was adopted in response to a number of stabbing incidents between black and Hispanic prisoners. The memo was obtained by the Prison Law Project, in San Francisco.

The following schedule of program activities will be observed until further notice:

Visiting: Visits for Black and Mexican inmates will be behind the glass and limited to fifteen minutes per inmate per day. Visits for White and Other inmates will be unrestricted and conducted according to the normal visit procedures.

Canteen: Black and Mexican inmates will be escorted to the canteen ten inmates at a time. White and Other inmates will have access to the canteen during their normally scheduled yard periods.

Yard: There will be no yard activities for Black and Mexican inmates. There will be normal yard activities for White and Other inmates.

Dayroom: On weekends there will be no dayroom activities (phone calls or showers) for Black or Mexican inmates. On weekdays Black and Mexican inmates will be limited to five-minute phone calls and showers. All White and Other inmates are to have normal dayroom activities, including fifteen-minute phone calls and showers.

[Tourist Tips]

KAFKA ON THE WEST BANK

From "Understanding Curfews," in A Tourist's Pocket Dictionary for the West Bank, *by Fateh Azzam and George Giacaman. The guide is meant to help foreign visitors with the "tricky business" of getting around in the Palestinian territories that are still under Israeli military control. Azzam is the program coordinator of al-Haq, a Palestinian human-rights organization. Giacaman teaches philosophy at Birzeit University. Both live in Ramallah, on the West Bank.*

Curfews continue to be imposed on most of the West Bank. Chances are that at some point during your visit you will be dissuaded from going into certain places because of a curfew. In order to help you plan your visit, we have summarized several types of curfews based on our experience with the Israeli occupation. We have listed them in order of severity, starting with the most serious. Although they fall into general categories, every curfew is different and confusing. For example, jeeps patrol the streets announcing over loudspeakers that "movement is prohibited until further notice,"



"Slash and Burn," by Marcos Santilli. From a series of photographs taken by Santilli in the Amazon rain forest in southwestern Brazil to document the "inevitable, and too often pernicious, process of colonization which is devastating the last large unexplored virgin forest on the planet." The series was on display last November at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston as part of FotoFest 1994, *an exhibition of work by international photographers. Santilli lives in São Paulo, Brazil.*

but they neglect to tell you when movement stops being prohibited. You should not try to outguess or outsmart Israeli troops without Palestinian assistance. So your first step is to get yourself a Palestinian friend.

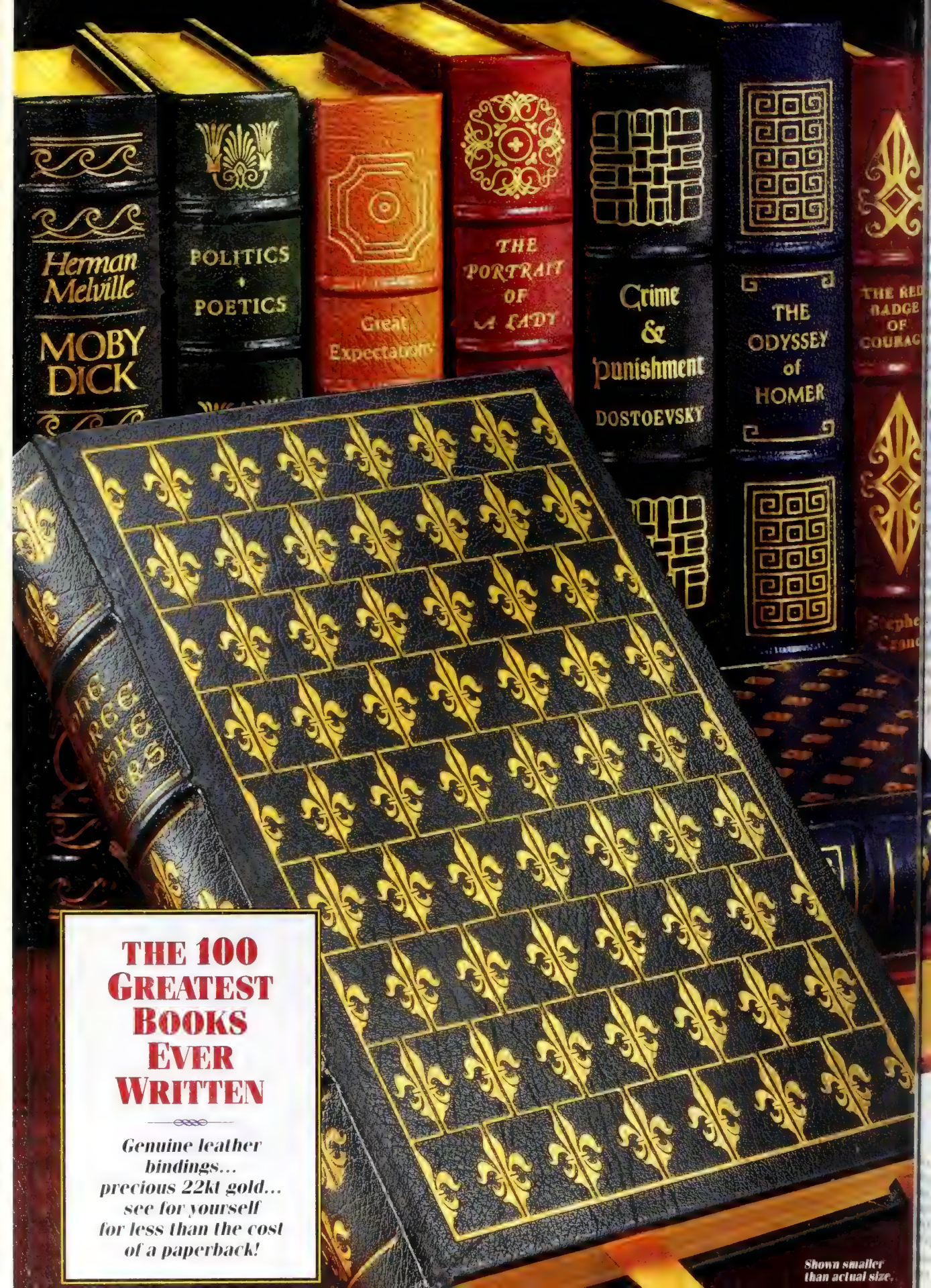
1. *The Life-Is-Suspended Curfew:* This type of curfew usually covers the entire town/village/refugee camp. No movement is allowed anywhere under any circumstances. The curfew is implemented by the Israelis in special circumstances such as the Gulf War and the period immediately following the massacre in Hebron. If you are caught violating the curfew, you may be fined, have your identity card withheld, and have your car impounded. If you are a male under thirty you may be beaten and/or jailed.

2. *The Stay-Away-from-the-Center-of-Town Curfew:* This curfew is usually limited to the business section of town, and often involves the placement of barbed wire and military barricades around the forbidden area. It is typically imposed after a particularly active demonstration or the throwing of a Molotov cocktail at a military patrol. If you are caught in the center of town, you may be subjected to the punishments cited in the curfew above.

3. *The Make-Yourself-Scarce Curfew:* This curfew is imposed in response to, or in anticipation of, demonstrations. It covers the entire town; all shops are closed, and you are supposed to stay at home and out of sight. However, a certain amount of light traffic is permitted without interference. If a soldier sees you walking or driving he will probably scream at you to go back to your house, but will not fine you or beat you.

4. *The Is-There-or-Isn't-There Curfew:* This type of curfew covers the business district. It is particularly confusing because you do not hear about it in the residential part of town. You go into the center of town to work or shop and find only light traffic and the newspaper boys. Often offices that are not located on the main street operate normally, so you can still get some things done.

5. *Curfews of Mind:* You should be aware of how to address soldiers at checkpoints, on the street, and at airports and other borders. We would strongly advise you to curfew your mind in such situations. Hostility may deny you access to where you need to go; camaraderie may cast shadows on your credibility in the minds of your Palestinian hosts. A matter-of-fact attitude is best.



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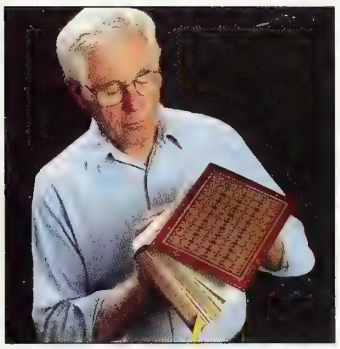
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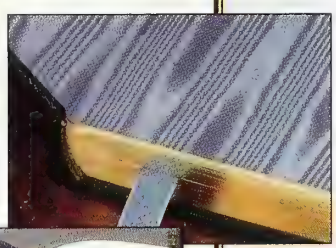
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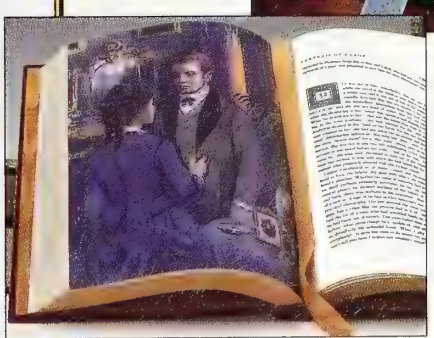
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[Prophecies]

THE END IS NEARISH!

From a series of press releases issued between August 1993 and October 1994 by Neal Chase, spokesman for Baha'is Under the Provisions of the Covenant, a religious sect based in Missoula, Montana.

RELEASE DATE: AUGUST 4, 1993

In our previous releases, we gave you the exact date that New York was to be bombed: November 26, 1992, the Day of the Covenant. That date, plus the prophesied season of three months (Daniel 7:12) brought us to February 26, 1993, the day, the minute, the hour, the second that the World Trade Center was bombed. We stated that this was just an OMEN of the big one yet to come.

Now we are giving the date for the big one. Saddam Hussein has vowed to take revenge on New York and the United Nations for what they did to his country. Ezekiel gives us THE VERY DAY that this will happen. In chapter 4, verse 5, he states that the destruction of the city will last 190 days, which, counting from the date of the bombing of the World Trade Center, brings us exactly to September 4, 1993, the day the UN building and all New York City will be nuked.



From Willamette Week, *published in Portland, Oregon.*

We have warned you. The blood of the people is not on our hands.

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 1993

From the date of the World Trade Center bombing of February 26, 1993 (which we accurately predicted), there were exactly 190 days to September 4, 1993. Ezekiel then gives 40 more days in chapter 4, verse 6, which brings us to October 14, 1993, the day the UN building and all New York City will be destroyed by a thermonuclear bomb!

Noah sent out three releases telling the people the day of the flood to come. With the third and final release, the flood wiped out those who had scoffed at him. This release is the third release pertaining to the big one. This third release is the final blast, the warning trumpet.

The waiting is over.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 1993

On March 23, 1994, the veils will be rent asunder with the fiery holocaust of New York City's millions of inhabitants! Forty days later, on May 2, 1994, will come the Battle of Armageddon, in which one third of mankind will be killed in one hour of thermonuclear war.

WE DIDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE when we wrote in our previous releases that New York would be destroyed on September 4 and October 14, 1993. We didn't make a mistake, not even a teeny eeny one!

The New Jerusalem Bible and the New English Bible both say, in Ezekiel 4, that the destruction of the city of New York will occur over a period of 190 days. But the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version give 390 days for that same verse of Ezekiel. We gave the earlier date because if we had given the later date of 390 days and all New York had been destroyed after 190 days—on September 4—or even 40 days after that—on October 14—then everyone would be dead and we would be to blame for having misguided the people.

There shall be no more delay! God never makes a promise he doesn't keep.

RELEASE DATE: APRIL 4, 1994

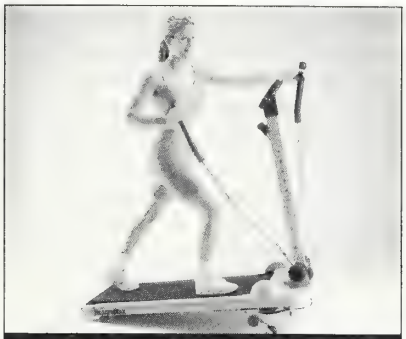
All the dates we have given in our past releases are correct dates given by God as contained in the Holy Scriptures. Not one of these dates was wrong; all of them pertain to the siege of the city of New York and the UN building, which will come to an end on May 2, 1994.

Exactly 390 days after the World Trade Center bombing, on March 23, 1994, came the Edison Gas Explosion. [A gas pipeline exploded in Edison, New Jersey, on March 24, injuring about a hundred residents.] As reported by

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the *New York Times*, it was likened by eyewitnesses to a nuclear blast comparable to Nagasaki or Hiroshima. This woke up the people of that area, who are in IMMEDIATE DANGER, so that now they can leave the city by May 2, 1994, when the siege will be complete.

Ezekiel gives a total of 430 days for the siege of the city, one day for each year that the Israelites were in captivity in Egypt before the Exodus of Moses. Four hundred and thirty days added to the World Trade Center bombing of February 26, 1993, brings us exactly to May 2, 1994.

By now, all the people have been forewarned. We have done our job.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 9, 1994

Exactly as we have been predicting, Saddam Hussein has now mobilized his forces to take his revenge for the Gulf War: full-scale thermonuclear destruction of the UN building and all New York City, scheduled to take place on November 26, 1994, give or take a week or two.

On May 2, 1994, there was the Lincoln Tunnel Explosion, which completed the days of the siege. [On May 5, a helicopter crashed near the New Jersey entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel and burst into flames, killing two.] In Revelation 8 it says that there will be "silence in heaven for about half an hour." The original Greek shows that in fact this half hour is half a year, or about 180 days. About 180 days from May 2, 1994, brings us to the significant Holy Day of November 26, 1994. The Bible does not say exactly 180 days but about that much time, with a week or two leeway, for the nuclear destruction of the UN building and New York City to take place.

We are the only ones in the entire world guiding the people to their safety, security, and salvation!

We have a 100 percent track record!

[Divination]

THE GATES OF HELL?

From a message posted anonymously on the Internet last fall.

Warning! Bill Gates (president of Microsoft) may be the next Antichrist.

Revelation 13:18 says, "Let anyone who has intelligence work out the number of the beast, for the number represents a man's name, and the numerical value of its letters is six hundred and sixty-six."

Bill Gates's full name is William Henry Gates III. Nowadays he is known as Bill Gates (III). By converting the letters of his current name to their ASCII values, you get the following:

BILLGATES3

66+73+76+76+71+65+84+69+83+3=666

Daniel 7:23 says, "The explanation he gave was this: 'The fourth beast signifies a fourth kingdom which will appear on earth. It will differ from the other kingdoms; it will devour the whole earth, treading it down and crushing it.'"

Current history knows three Antichrists: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and the Pope. Is the fourth beast the Microsoft corporation, which represents the power of money?

[Essay]

LET IT BURN

From World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth, *by Stephen J. Pyne, to be published next month by Henry Holt. Pyne is a professor of American studies at Arizona State University West and the author of seven books, including* Burning Bush *and* Fire in America.

We are uniquely fire creatures on a uniquely fire planet. Other planetary bodies in the solar system have elements of combustion—Jupiter has, in lightning, an ignition source; Mars, traces of free oxygen; Titan, a methane-based fuel. Only Earth, however, has all the essential elements of combustion in abundance, because only Earth has life.

Marine life has pumped the atmosphere with oxygen, and terrestrial life has stocked the continents with carbon. So Earth—its lands stuffed with organic fuels, its atmosphere saturated with oxygen, its surface pummeled with lightning—is unstable, ready to burn. And the planet possesses, in us, a creature not merely adapted to fire's presence, or even prone to exploit and encourage fire, but capable of starting and stopping it. A fire creature.

The history of Earth is unintelligible without the history of fire. The two, fire and humans, have coevolved, like the bonded strands of a DNA molecule. The domination of the planet by humans is largely attributable to their control over fire; in turn, the distribution

and characteristics of fire have become profoundly dependent on humans. Fire and humanity have become inseparable and indispensable; together they have repeatedly remade Earth.

It comes as no surprise to learn that among human societies the belief in a world-creating and world-ending fire is nearly universal. From the Nordic Ragnarok to the Aztec New Fire, from the Great Fire of the Stoics to the Christian Apocalypse, the pine-pitch torch to the nuclear firestorm, the concept of fire as the be-all and end-all has been essential to human understanding.

The original premise held that fire destroyed one world in order to make another. Behind this vision lay the sense in which humanity claimed nature by fire, rendered it habitable, refashioned the wild into the domesticated, and asserted a unique identity. The threat of a world overwhelmed by fire was no greater than the threat of a world without fire.

But increasingly, as humans have urbanized and industrialized, the vision of a world-ending fire has endured, whereas the image of a world-creating one has vanished. Over the past decade this ancient mythology has found a new avatar—the environmental catastrophe in its multiple incarnations. Nuclear winter, in which fire-spawned smoke would plunge Earth into the cold and dark of a new ice age. Greenhouse summer, its complement, whose heat-trapping gases—released by fire—promise to convert Earth into an oven. Uncontrolled slash-and-burn clearances in Amazonia, Indonesia, India—all threatening biodiversity, all belching greenhouse gases. Smoke plumes that fill the Amazon Basin, and pastoral burns that pull the Sahara southward. The Great Black Dragon fire that incinerated China's Hinggan forest. The East Kalimantan fires that leveled nine million acres of Borneo rain forest. Australia's Ash Wednesday fires that, within hours, brought an industrialized nation to its knees. Conflagrations through Yellowstone National Park, a fiery black hole that in 1988 sucked in more than $130 million worth of fire-fighting resources without effect. Forest-powered holocausts in Oakland and Malibu, California. Oil fires in Kuwait that replaced the traditional imagery of a scorched earth with that of a scorched sky. Fire has given environmentalism a graphic iconography of great power. Whatever their message of destruction, activists have sought to dramatize it for the media with images of fire. The result is that by associating fire with various images of devastation, fire itself has become identified as merely an agent of devastation.

But once one accepts that neither Earth nor humanity can shed fire and remain constant, the contemporary geography of fire looks altogether different. Earth does have a fire problem, but it is one of maldistribution. There is too much of the wrong kind of fire in the wrong places and at the wrong times, and not enough of the right kind of fire at the right places and times.

In the new world order, fire is as much a victim as a villain. Historically, the unwarranted suppression of fire has damaged Earth as much as its promiscuous misuse. But the unset-

[Phenomena]

NATURE'S STRAIGHT LINES

From "Straight Lines in Nature," by Gail Jensen Sanford, in the November 2, 1994, issue of Valley Voice, *a biweekly newspaper published in Visalia, California. Sanford composed the list below after a professor remarked during a class on Wilderness in American Literature that "straight lines on the landscape are put there by man." Sanford lives in Visalia.*

Line along the top of a breaking wave
Distant edge of a prairie
Paths of hard rain and hail
Snow-covered fields
Patterns in crystals
Lines of white quartz in a granite surface
Icicles, stalactites, stalagmites
Surface of a calm lake
Markings on zebras and tigers
Bill of a duck
Legs of a sandpiper
Angle of migrating birds
Dive of a raptor
New frond of a fern
Spikes of a cactus
Trunks of young, fast-growing trees
Pine needles
Silk strands woven by spiders
Cracks in the surface of ice
Strata of metamorphic rock
Sides of a volcano
Wisps of windblown altocumulus clouds
Inside edge of a half-moon

tling of the planet's ecology has thrown into confusion the role of fire and of humans who, by evolutionary right and responsibility, ought to be managing it.

The Industrial Revolution profoundly reworked the geography of fire. Just as early hominids sought to replace the flame with the torch, and as early agriculturalists sought to substitute domesticated burning for wildfire, modernized societies have striven to replace wildland combustion with industrial combustion. Unlike the hearth, the furnace burns without regard to the living environment. Industrial combustion, dependent on fossil fuels, stands outside the ancient ecology of fire—and outside the traditional social mores that guided fire use for generations.

Over the millennia anthropogenic fire—the human use of fire in nature, whether it be for hunting, for slash-and-burn cultivation, for the clearing of cane for Kentucky bluegrass—has played a crucial role in the tender balance between human society and its natural environment. But the primitivism of the contemporary environmental movement frequently denies anthropogenic fire a role in the management of parks, wilderness, and natural reserves. As a projection of human agency, such fires, it is argued, represent a dangerous intervention into the natural order that these sites seek to preserve. This policy is based on a false belief that fire is unnecessary and undesirable. The result is that anthropogenic fire may be extinguished altogether.

But much of the natural world that preservationists seek to protect coevolved with anthropogenic fire. To remove that fire regime may be catastrophic; to replace anthropogenic fire with lightning fire alone does not restore a natural, prehistoric state but more likely fashions an ecosystem that has never before existed. Unfortunately, no icons have emerged to argue the case for the legitimacy, utility, or necessity of anthropogenic fire; there is no counter-imagery of fire as a global hearth, no Smokey the Torch to advance the case for anthropogenic burning as an agent of benign stewardship.

Instead climate, like cancer, has become a universal touchstone to condemn unwanted environmental practices. In Europe, the main environmental crisis is air pollution; global policies in the West reflect that bias. During the colonial period, the attempted suppression of indigenous burning by European powers in Africa, Asia, and North America was an ecological disaster, though one often ignored because it accompanied other equally damaging and more visible practices. Today European-dominated policy stands to repeat these errors; once again it categorically seeks to expunge fire from the landscape. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, for example, has dispatched Germans, Finns, and French to Mauritania, Nepal, and Patagonia to discourage free-burning fires. (No one has suggested sending Senegalese or Filipinos to Sweden or Austria to help reintroduce anthropogenic fire.) But carbon cannot be sequestered like bullion. Stockpile biomass carbon and you also stockpile fuel, the combustion equivalent of burying toxic waste. Cease controlled burning and, paradoxically, you may stoke ever larger conflagrations. Refuse to tend the domestic fire and the feral fire will return.

Anything that stores carbon—that is, any

[Key]

REMORSE CODE

From Pager Power, *by Ted Strauss, a guide that "turns your plain digital pager into a complete text message center," published by Ten Speed Press. Strauss assigned numbers to more than 11,000 words and phrases; a selection is listed below. Usually after reaching an acquaintance's pager service, a caller transmits a phone number where the caller can be reached; using Strauss's code, the caller can instead transmit a numerical message to be decoded by the beeper owner.*

000 A doctor wants to speak with you
017 Are the kids with you?
023 Are you going to need a ride?
056 Can you come home early?
072 Can't make the meeting
084 Client is unhappy
142 Finish your homework
149x Game is in inning x
172 Hip, hip, hooray
183 How could I have existed without you?
200 I can explain everything
230 I feel like you're taking me for granted
264 I love getting pager messages from you
271 I might have a fever
282 I still love you
354 I'm feeling very cranky
442 It's not what you said, it's the way you said it
502 Loving you makes life worth living
518 Mow the lawn
772 Thinking naughty thoughts of you
776 This time I'm really leaving
818 What did I do to deserve you?
858 What's the world coming to?

living system—demands a fire tithe. That tithe can be given voluntarily or it will be extracted by force. Over much of Earth, for hundreds of thousands of years, humans have lit their obligatory fires. They have paid the fire tithe on behalf of their resident ecosystem. Now the situation has blurred: the liberation of fossil fuels has changed the identity of *Homo sapiens* as a fire creature; new fire technologies have broken down the old order without installing a replacement. But the issues involve more than just atmospheric pollutants and human-governed combustion. With or without humans, with or without industrial combustion, Earth will burn. Anthropogenic fire must be defended against both those who seek to replace the flame with the furnace and those who would abolish the torch for the lightning bolt.

To preserve and use fire is the oldest of humanity's ecological duties, its most distinctive trait as a species, the first of its quests for power and knowledge. We hold the flame for the planet. Earth's trial by fire is our own.

[Manners]

POLITE PILL-POPPING

From "The (Unfortunately) Elusive Pill Etiquette," by "Ginger Vitas," in the Fall 1994 issue of Pills-a-go-go, *a 'zine, published in Seattle, that features articles on the recreational use of prescription drugs.*

I like to think of pill etiquette as just plain good manners. If you find yourself constantly receiving pills, something is awry. On the other hand, if you are always handing out your stash, you may be racking up some good karma points, but you may also be known as a sucker.

Basically, the first rule is *equitability*. If you receive, by all means give a little! If you have three pills, give one. If you have fifty, give five. It's cool: you get high and you spread the wealth. That's what it's all about.

A little anecdote to illustrate: In our last year of college, I gave out more Xanax to Nadia and Wenny than you'd believe. They would take, like, four hits at a time, so my prescriptions would go pretty quickly. They never brought me anything, but I just figured they didn't have a line to anything. And I was getting, so why not spread it around? Turned out Wenny had a hot line to Soma and to Darvocet. When I found out, I hinted that she might give me a handful—and she kicked down *one*. Needless to say, from then on I was much less generous.

The second rule is: *If you're getting for free, don't complain.* Very little is as irritating as giving away your last Vicodin (or Darvocet, or Xanax) and having the idiot you gave it to tell you that he "didn't feel anything." There are plenty of adjectives that come to mind: ungrateful, wretched, inconsiderate. If you pay for something, you can expect to get your money's

[FTP Sites]

WHERE TO SCORE ON THE INTERNET

From a list of FTP (file transfer protocol) sites on the Internet where information about legal and illegal drugs can be obtained anonymously. The list appeared in the October 1994 issue of High Times.

cactus.growers.guide: A guide on how to grow psychedelic cacti

cs.act.1970: The text of the Controlled Substances Act of 1970

dm.faq: Answers to your questions about dextromethorphan

ez.garden: A guide to hydroponic marijuana growing on a small scale

faq-ecstasy: Answers to frequently asked questions about MDMA (Ecstasy)

grow.shrooms: Instructions on how to grow psilocybin mushrooms

hbwr: Reports from people who have ingested Hawaiian baby woodrose seeds

james.on.n2O: "Subjective Effects of Nitrous Oxide," by William James (1882)

lsd.synthesis: How to synthesize LSD

netherlands.policy: The Netherlands' official statement on its drug laws

pihkal: The second half of Alexander and Ann Shulgin's *PIHKAL: Phenethylamines I Have Known and Loved*

piss.list: A list of companies, categorized by whether or not they require employees to take drug tests

piss.n.pass: Advice on how to beat urine tests

pot.bible: "Marijuana and the Bible," a pamphlet from the Ethiopian Coptic Church

probchild: The text of Albert Hoffman's book *LSD: My Problem Child*

santa.cruz: The text of Santa Cruz's medical marijuana initiative

smart.drug.info: An overview of smart drugs

thc.extraction: Instructions for making hash oil

worth. But if you receive a gift, be gracious.

Third: *If you accept them, take them.* Otherwise you're only wasting the goods and depriving someone of a high.

Fourth: *Expect a reasonable rate of return.* This one is tricky. What is gold to one person may be silver to another. But get real: ten Xanax are not going to get you ten Percodans. Sometimes making a deal is the best policy here; it can avoid hurt feelings. Most often, if things are discussed in advance, the trade works out for the best.

Fifth: *Don't ask.* People will give when they want to give. For the past three years I had the good fortune of having an almost constant supply of Vicodin and Xanax. As you might expect, I also had a never-ending supply of "best friends" more than willing to help me partake. Anyone who's ever had a good stock—be it pills, pot, or any other illicit material—knows what I'm talking about. Freeloaders come in many forms: girls who flirt excessively, then hit you up for "just one . . . please?" or fakers who complain of whatever ailment you happen to have the pill for.

There was this one girl, Judy, who found out that I had Vic. It turned out she was a major pillhead, too, but the worst kind.

"Man, my head really hurts," she'd moan, always looking right at me.

"Try some aspirin," I'd say, kind of cornered-like.

"I did," she'd say, "but it's not helping. Hey, do you have, you know, anything?"

"I, um, ran out, um, yesterday," I'd say. Then I'd have to spend the rest of the day hiding my own consumption.

There are ways of hinting, but you have to be subtle, staying within the lines of good manners. If you want painkillers, mention a little pain; if you want speed, complain of being tired. But, for God's sake, don't push it—even with friends.

[Sonnet]

RADICAL VERSE

The following sonnet, "When the Cheering Stopped," appears in Hints & Allegations: The World (In Poetry and Prose), *by William M. Kunstler, published by Four Walls Eight Windows. Kunstler was a defense attorney at the trial of the Chicago 8. More recently, he represented the men convicted of conspiracy in the World Trade Center bombings. In his introduction to the poem below, Kunstler, who has been composing sonnets for more than fifty years, explains that he wrote it soon after O. J. Simpson's arrest. "I was struck with the paradox of how quickly a sports idol could be caught up in a tragedy of immense proportions," Kunstler writes. "Of one thing I am certain, this will not be my last sonnet about the matter."*

He once pranced through the opposition teams
Whose lines would part like butter to the knife;
The press devoted countless newsprint reams
To every fact of his collegiate life
The Heisman Trophy soon became his prize
And his initials known from West to East;
In Buffalo, he loved to hear the cries
Of fans who gloried in each touchdown feast.
He then appeared upon the flickering screen
To talk about the feats of other men;
His Hertz commercials showed him fit and lean,
Still worthy of the news reporters' pen.
He's learned the cruelest lesson of them all—
Celebrity does not prevent a fall.

[Tale]

GOSSIP WORTH WAITING FOR

From a letter to the editor by K. Sinclair-Loutit in the November 24, 1994, issue of The London Review of Books. *The letter was prompted by allegations in the British press about a recent stay by Jonathan Aitken, the chief secretary to the treasury, at the Ritz hotel in Paris, where half of Aitken's bill was apparently paid by a Saudi businessman. News reports implied that the payment was tantamount to a bribe; Aitken claimed that it was merely an accounting mix-up.*

Mr. Jonathan Aitken is not, as it happens, the first Tory minister to get into a spot of bother as a result of staying at the Paris Ritz. During the winter of 1939–40, when I was working in Paris with Polish exiles, Leslie Hore-Belisha, then British minister of war, came over from London. He surprised the embassy by insisting on staying at the Ritz rather than with the ambassador. In any event, his visit was curtailed by a feverish cold, which forced him to rush back to London in his Royal Air Force transport plane, all wrapped up in blankets like a mummy.

A week after his abrupt return home a wonderfully packed cylindrical cardboard box was delivered to the embassy. When this was opened it revealed a dome-shaped support on

[Mosaics]

ART AL DENTE





PAMELA GENTILE

"Mary Tyler Moore" and "Meat Loaf," by Jason Mecier. From a series of celebrity portraits that Mecier created by gluing dry pasta and beans onto wood; each mosaic is framed and equipped with a functioning clock. In a statement accompanying his work, Mecier writes that "the medium of beans and noodles creates an abstract and textual impression of the image, which undergoes a Daliesque transformation into photorealism as the distance between the viewer and the artwork increases." Mecier's mosaics are on display this month at the Belcher Studios Gallery, in San Francisco.

which reposed a wig, all curled and scented. It had come, addressed to the ambassador, from the best wigmaker in Paris; the box bore a label with the name of Mr. Hore-Belisha. Sir Ronald Campbell, the ambassador, did not know what to make of it. He felt that there must be a catch somewhere, so he asked a member of his staff to contact the wigmaker who sent it.

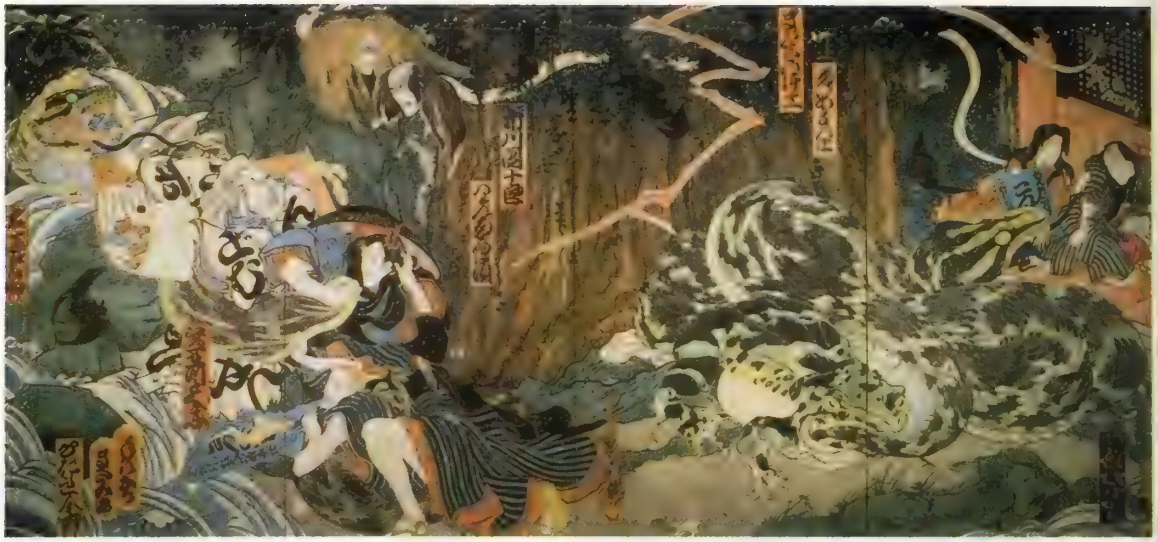
The explanation that was uncovered revealed a little-advertised aspect of the Ritz hotel's service. In a hotel of the Ritz's standards it seems that guests flush valuable items down the water closets often enough for the management to need to take appropriate precautions. Waste waters from each room are led down to a subbasement, where they are discharged from their numbered pipes onto a grid over which presides a trusty employee with an instrument rather like a croupier's rake. Thus, when a diamond and ruby necklace appears, it can be fished out and returned to its owner.

One day, a wig was discharged onto this grid, somewhat the worse for its journey. Retrieved, it was hosed down and sent to a Paris wigmaker for a wash and set; it had a label on the inside with a London maker's address and a serial number. The Paris wigmakers contacted their London confrere to check the number. They had thought it prudent to verify that it really did belong to the tenant of the room, the Right Honourable Leslie Hore-Belisha. The number was identified as indeed being that of Mr. Hore-Belisha's own wig.

It seems that on the day the wig went down the drain the floor staff had realized that things were taking a very bad turn in the Hore-Belisha suite: raised voices, door bangings, and sudden departures. It appears that a guest had seized the minister's wig and flushed it down the drain, slamming the door behind him as he left. Since the minister was completely bald and had left his spare wig behind, he decided to catch a bad cold, curtail his stay, and go home with a blanket over his head.

Seen from the vantage point of 1994, one can appreciate all the more the social grace of those times. It has taken fifty-five years—not fifty-five minutes, as might occur today—for this account to be presented for publication.

K. Sinclair-Loutit
Rabat, Morocco



"AIDS Series: Makiki Height Disaster," by Masami Teraoka. Teraoka, a Japanese-American artist, has combined elements of traditional Japanese handscrolls, Kabuki theater, ghost legends, and woodblock prints to depict a mythological narrative about AIDS. The scenario above is set in Hawaii; the action begins at the far right. According to text that accompanies the art, "Two lovers resting on a temple's veranda are about to be devoured by a huge snake, symbolizing here the AIDS virus and its means of transmission. The samurai grimaces because the courtesan has announced that they will have to use the condom she holds. At the left, former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop overlooks a disaster area in which an interracial couple struggles against an onslaught of giant condoms." Teraoka's screen was on display last month as part of Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky, *an exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, in New York City.*

[Sermon]

BE THOU MORE SHELTERING: AN AIDS PRAYER

Excerpted from a sermon given by Tony Kushner on October 9, 1994, a National Day of Prayer for AIDS, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in New York City. The prayer will appear in its entirety in Thinking About the Longstanding Problems of Virtue and Happiness, *to be published in May by Theater Communications Group. Kushner, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his play* Angels in America, *spoke as part of a series of sermons at the cathedral on "Art and the Sacred."*

Dearly beloved, let us pray.

God:

A cure would be nice. Rid those infected by this insatiable, unappeasable murderer of its lethal presence. Reconstitute the shattered, restore to health all those whose bodies, beleaguered, have betrayed them, whose defenses have permitted entrance to illnesses formerly at home only in cattle, in swine, and in birds. Return to the cattle and the swine and the birds the intestinal parasite, the invader of lungs, the eye blinder, the brain devourer, the detacher of retinas. Rid even the cattle and birds of these terrors; heal the whole world. Now.

Protect the injection-drug user, the baby with AIDS, the sex worker, the woman whose lover was infected, the gay man whose lover was infected; protect the infected lover, the casual contact, the one-night stand, the pickup, the put-down; protect the fools who don't protect themselves, who don't protect others—*you* protect them. The misguided, too, and the misinformed, the ambivalent about living: show them life, not death. The kid who thinks that immortality is part of the numinous glory of sex; who didn't believe this, once, discovering sex? Protect this kid; let this kid learn otherwise and live past the learning. Protect all kids, make them wiser, but, until wise, make them immortal.

Must grace fall so unevenly on the earth? Must goodness precipitate from sky to ground so infrequently? We are parched for goodness, we perish for lack of lively rain; there's a drought for want of grace, everywhere. Surely this has not escaped your notice. All life hesitates now, wondering, in the night that has descended, in the dry endless night that's fallen instead of the expected rain: where are you?

If prayer is a beseeching, a seeking after the hidden heart and face of God, then this peremp-

tory, querulous, insistent demanding, this pounding at your door, cannot be called a prayer—this importune sleeve-tugging while you are distracted, concerned, perhaps, with something more important: holding Earth to its orbit, perhaps, keeping it from careening into the sun; or perhaps you tend another world other than ours and do a better job with that one, where there is nothing like AIDS and your tutelage is gentler and the lessons are easier to learn.

Manifest yourself now. With a cure, now. With a treatment, now. With a treatment that isn't more snakebite venom, more spider-bite poison, which is all that fourteen years of prayers have given us. Reveal yourself with an imminent medical miracle. Announce it on the evening news: something, finally, that doesn't fail to live up to its promise by morning of the following day. Hear our prayer.

I almost know you are there; I think Wordsworth was right, and you are our home. At present we are homeless, or imagine ourselves to be. Bleeding life in the universe of wounds. Be thou more sheltering, God. Pay more attention.

[Story]

THE POPE

From a short story by David Albahari in Description of a Struggle, *an anthology of Eastern European writing, edited by Michael March and published by Vintage. Albahari, a Serbian writer, is currently the International Writer-in-Residence at the University of Calgary. He is the author, most recently, of* Zinc, *a collection of stories. Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursać.*

The Pope wakes early. The window is open, the air fresh, the sky blue. He gets up, tripping on his long nightshirt, and notices a bird on the windowsill. The Pope goes back to the night table, but nothing is left of last night's sandwich. "Bird," says the Pope, "will you wait while I send someone for a little bread?" The bird does not reply. "Or would you prefer grains—wheat or millet?" The bird keeps quiet. The Pope lifts the receiver and calls the central warehouse. "Hello?" says a sleepy voice. "Is there any millet in the warehouse?" asks the Pope. "Who's asking?" asks the voice. "Forget it," says the Pope, and he puts the receiver back down.

♦

If there is one thing he hates, it is mornings. Every time he wakes up, it seems, he finds his nightshirt has twisted itself all the way up to his chin. "I would rather sleep in pajamas," says the Pope, angrily stamping his foot. The cardinals exchange glances. "And I've had it with this nightcap," howls the Pope, and he flings the cap from his head. The cap drops onto lined silk slippers, a gift from the Turkish ambassador. A cardinal finally dares to speak: "Our regulations do not permit it." Regulations, thinks the Pope, damnation. I should have stayed an ordinary village priest.

♦

The Pope writes poems. A journalist asks him, "In your case might one speak, indeed, of

[Interview]

A CURVE BALL FROM THE GREAT BEYOND

From an interview with "the Spirit of Babe Ruth," as channeled by Rev. Speaker Gerald A. Polley, in volume 7, issue number 2, of Voices from Spirit Magazine, *published in Ellsworth, Maine. Questions were provided by Rev. Speaker Linda J. Polley.*

Q: Of all the teams you played on, what was your favorite?

A: Considering all the wonderful people I played with, that is a very hard question to answer. But I would have to say the Red Sox.

Q: What did you think of *Field of Dreams*?

A: On behalf of everyone who has ever played baseball, I have been asked to send my compliments to the writers, producers, and actors of this fine production. May you capture the dreams of others as well as you captured ours.

Q: What do you think of Hank Aaron beating your home-run record?

A: Way to go, Hank! Atta boy!

Q: What do you do now in the Spirit World?

A: A lot of personal appearances and a lot of exhibition games. There aren't any real leagues here, but old teams do get together quite often to give the crowds some excitement.

Q: Should Pete Rose be allowed in the Baseball Hall of Fame?

A: This is a heartbreaking question for me. I admire the man greatly and am extremely proud of his accomplishments in baseball. And my commenting on his character would be like the pot calling the kettle black! I, myself, would look only to the man's record on the field. But I am very glad I do not have to make the decision.

divine inspiration." The Pope has read *Faust* and he knows where this question is leading. So he does not respond. "Any other questions?" says the cardinal who is the Pope's press attaché. The Pope feels beads of sweat on his forehead like the touch of someone's icy hand.

♦

Morning meetings, official noon luncheons, afternoon preparations for the next day—only in the evening (before and after vespers) does the Pope have a bit of time to himself. He sits by a window and gazes into the sky. Of all he sees he likes the clouds best. Each cloud is shaped differently. Some look like familiar things, others like things soon to be invented; still others suggest distant worlds, and some dissolve as the Pope watches. Footsteps, heard from the depths of the palace, belong to a young monk who brings the Pope his chamber pot. The Pope would gladly speak with the young man, but the monk cut off his own tongue so that he could pledge all his thoughts to God. What nonsense, thinks the Pope. The monk sets the pot behind the door, covers it with a richly embroidered cloth, bows, and leaves.

♦

The Pope is alone. Nothing interests him. He has leafed through the Holy Gospels but he could not find a single passage he did not already know by heart. He could call someone on the phone, but whom? He used to entertain himself by dialing numbers on the phone at random and then giggling into his sleeve when some irate voice barked, "Hello! Hello? Who's there?" But the Pope feels that he has outgrown such petty diversions. Now he'd rather imagine a world in which there are at least two popes. He'd have someone to play dominoes or chess with. Imagine if there were three—cards! The Pope goes over to the desk, flicks on his computer, and enters the question: "When will the next Ecumenical Council be held?" The computer replies, "The year 2012." The Pope types: "But I won't be alive then." "You won't," replies the computer, "but the Pope will."

♦

The Pope kneels and talks with a six-year-old boy. They are in an orphanage at Saint Catherine's, or Isabela's, or Dominique's, or Genevieve's. So many immaculate women, thinks the Pope, in this, the worst of all worlds—nothing short of incredible! He makes a final stab at urging the little boy to talk, but the boy is intractable. The Pope knows what comes next: the boy will either start to cry or stick out his tongue. His sweet, smooth, pink little tongue! The Pope, of course, would prefer the tongue, but one never can be sure with these rascals. The Pope gets up, resting in passing on the boy's shoulder (so small, so fragile), and takes the opportunity to stealthily tweak the child's bright red ear. The Pope learned that trick in his younger years, before they delivered him to the seminary. And so when he steps back and hears the child's howl (reminding him poignantly of the Inquisition), the Pope turns and shrugs helplessly. And one of the robust nuns tries to soothe the boy by saying, "Don't cry, son. The Pope will visit us again."

Am I a good man? wonders the Pope. He sits in a large, empty room in which all sounds are oddly amplified. When he moves his foot and his rheumatic knee cracks, all the saints seem to tumble from the walls. Maybe goodness is somehow related to staying still? The Pope pulls the silken cord. Although he hears nothing, he knows that in the depths of the Vatican a mechanism is set in motion that, a moment later, will appear at the door in the form of the young dumb monk with the chamber pot in his hands. "This must be a mistake," says the Pope. "I summoned the cardinals, not you." The monk shrugs, smiles, and moves toward the door. "But no matter," says the Pope. "Come here." The monk comes over, and the Pope takes him by the hand. "Tell me," says the Pope, "am I a good man?" The monk's eyes fly open, he gropes for the right facial expression, and then he opens his mouth. The Pope first sees the stump of his tongue, strangely thick and lumpy, then he hears a voice that embodies all voices. Then the walls begin to crumble.

♦

The Pope is ninety-nine years old. He has long since stopped eating, sleeping, and receiving visitors. He stares unswervingly at the velvet curtain behind which, he is convinced, God resides. He does not know where he has gotten this notion that velvet and God are associated. Perhaps the particular rough smoothness of the fabric? Who knows? The Pope would gladly dismiss this with a wave of his hand, but he cannot move it. He continues to stare at the velvet curtain, longing for even the slightest trembling of its folds. God, however, remains silent, hesitating. The Pope recalls his life's most cherished moment: when he sat at a marble sweetshop table, still a boy, and they served him a large dish of ice cream. When the curtain finally does move, the Pope is not surprised when, instead of God, he sees a smiling waitress in a short skirt with dimples in her cheeks. Or is this, perhaps, God's countenance? It no longer matters, the Pope knows. He closes his eyes, sticks out his tongue, and takes the last rites. With the drowsy aroma of vanilla. ■

WITHOUT EARTH THERE IS NO HEAVEN

The cosmos is not a physicist's equation

By Edwin Dobb

One tinder-dry afternoon this past August, a research team from the National Marine Fisheries Service pitched camp in a stand of lodgepole pine along the South Fork of the Salmon River in central Idaho. The site overlooked a stretch of water that serves as the spawning grounds for one of the few surviving populations of summer chinook in the region. Early the next morning the team would implant tiny electronic tags in several hundred juvenile fish, offspring of the previous year's run, in hopes of gaining information about their hazardous migration to the sea. I was there to watch them work.

Since my arrival, at sunset, I had been listening to a Navajo flute recording played from the far side of camp by a fisheries technician named Rich, a native of the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. The music was agreeable if melancholy, reminiscent of the evening plaint of a solitary bird and subdued, unobtrusive, borne in and out of earshot on an intermittent breeze. But shortly after nightfall Rich replaced the flute recording with one made in the early 1970s by the American Indian Movement. He then turned the volume up. Way up. Sometimes only the vernacular will do: Rich cranked it up.

For the next hour or so Rich's co-workers and I were treated to a bedtime harangue. Against a background of repetitive drumming and chanting, the speaker declaimed a litany of cruelties European civilization had inflicted upon the aboriginal peoples of the Americas and their ancestral homelands. His voice rang through the camp like that of a wrathful woodland god, except that this god lacked poetry. He was noisy but uninspired. With few exceptions, his fire-and-brimstone sermon was a

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WE ARE AS BITS OF DUST IN A SPECTACLE WHOSE SCOPE BEGGARS THE IMAGINATION, WHOSE SECRETS MOCK REASON



list of stone cold clichés burdened with ponderous references to "th captors," their infernal machines, and the fall of Babylon, and deliverc in a tone-deaf manner. Imagine a Hallmark Card translation of a Bo Marley lyric recited over a bullhorn by a disgruntled tour guide. No imagine listening to this weird rant in the middle of the forest in th middle of the night.

Compounding the surrealism of the occasion was the layout of Rich camp, or what could be seen of it in the enfolding darkness. At that poi in the season open fires were banned by the Forest Service, so Rich pos tioned a Coleman lantern on the ground instead and pondered its mono onous glow from an aluminum chair. Parked a few feet away was his agir Chevrolet Suburban, in which he kept his gear—cooler, propane stov the offending tape player. Most aspects of Rich's camp, in other word were derived from the selfsame civilization the booming voice co demned. And that voice. It smothered every other sound in the forest– the pines creaking overhead, the stream riffling through the nearby mea ow, the willows shifting along its banks. Worst of all, it dispelled the a tonishing silence that at night permeates such places, superimposing c this still relatively untrammeled patch of the natural world—immediate at hand, in fact pressing in on all sides—a picture of the natural world, picture in which pristine forest is subdivided into suburban lawns ar parking lots. Magritte might have been amused.

Rich surely was, though for reasons all his own. Quick to laugh and se effacing, he apologized the next day, allowing that, yes, he had gone on th warpath and, no, he could not explain what had driven him to such lunac unless it was the wide white moon itself. The crew welcomed the opport nity, any opportunity, to heckle their workmate, whom they obvious liked, but no one seemed to have been bothered much by his rhetoric raid on their peace of mind. No one seemed to have been won over by either, though I wondered if some phrases were not still ringing in the ears, as they had been in mine since I first heard them.

Long after Rich had turned off the AIM tape and extinguished h lantern, certain passages lingered in my mind, unbidden but insister Here is one of them: "We see you in your loneliness, stranded in the ur verse, alone from the past, alone from the future." The object of the pr noun was any descendant of the restless empire-building peoples wh displaced, murdered, and subjugated Rich's ancestors—including, course, me. Although the observation was not original—a sense of abi ing ontological solitude having become commonplace in Western cu ture—hearing it under those circumstances, being singled out, as it wer by a resounding, disembodied voice while sitting in the dark along th remote upper reaches of an Idaho salmon stream, made it strange poignant and disquieting. WE SEE YOU STRANDED IN TH UNIVERSE. And there I was, the only one in can still awake, still outside his tent, looking up through th treetops at the dazzling pitch of stars that is our galaxy

Who has not gazed at the night sky, mouth slightly agape? Th experience is so common, its effects so uniform, that a standard vocabul has evolved to describe it. Invariably we speak of the profound humility feel before the enormity of the universe. We are as bits of dust in a spect cle whose scope beggars the imagination, whose secrets make a mockery reason. If there is a message to be deciphered in the vast expanses of spa and time it is that life does not count for much in the big picture; all th we do and make, regardless of how noble it may seem, is little more than "stain on silence," to borrow the unforgettable and unforgiving phra Samuel Beckett used to describe his own doings and makings.

Confronting indifference on a cosmic scale cannot help but encoura feelings of diminishment, abandonment, implacable solitude. There every reason to believe that we, the residents of Earth, are alone in t

Illustrations by David Plunk

verse, stranded in a night that looms larger and longer with each new ronomical discovery. And unlike our fellow creatures, who have yet to k up from blessed oblivion, we are acutely aware of our position; we insomniac and obsessional, anxiously searching the sky for signs of nificance. Despite the rhetoric that surrounds stargazing—the wonder beholding such grandeur—this singularly human enterprise is shot ough with dread. Think of the huge antennae we have aimed upward the hope that other beings, living elsewhere in the universe, will con- t us. The alternative, that evolution is a game of solitaire, is unthink- e. WE SEE YOU IN YOUR LONELINESS. Whatever else it may be, search for extraterrestrial intelligence is a cry in the dark, revealing terrible longing around which our cosmology revolves.

These days one does not hear much about dread or longing in con- sations regarding the stars. Since early in this century, when cos- logy became a full-fledged science, the subjective side of stargazing s been relegated to the margins of serious thought, the suspect ter- n of astrologers and aboriginal peoples who still believe in corre- ndences between heaven and earth. But that has led to an impasse. lging from the success of popular books and films—Carl Sagan's evision series, *Cosmos,* has now been seen by more than four hun- d million people in sixty countries—we still seek from cosmology at we have always sought from it, which is to say, guidance in our empts to construct a metaphysical map of the world, at a time when smology has envisioned a universe that negates such attempts, by gating the agent in which they arise.

Take, for example, the theories of Stephen Hawking, probably the st-known cosmologist alive today and author of the best-selling book A *ef History of Time*. He says that his goal is "nothing less than a com- te description of the universe we live in," yet his history, for all its nceptual dazzle, is not only brief but woefully incomplete, even impov- shed. Stripped of the fanciful asides he adds to make the tale more ap- aling to the nonscientist—traveling into a black hole is a favorite—it an exceedingly abstract account of dumb matter expanding and con- cting, the universe as an insensate exercise in quantum mechanics and n-euclidean geometry. Lost in the hullabaloo over Hawking's ideas* is fact that his cosmos is lifeless, as are those described by most of his leagues. In the creation stories told by mainstream cosmologists such Hawking, Steven Weinberg, and Alan Guth, organisms are accidental ails of such negligible consequence that they drop from view, all of m, including the one that concocts such stories.

To my mind this is an extraordinary omission, and it will persist as g as cosmology is treated as a branch of physics. For decades physi- ts have served as the self-styled tour guides of the universe; they have nopolized the bullhorn, insisting that we look upward, "out there," enever we wish to encounter the cosmos. But does the cosmos not be- closer to home, on this planet, among the living? Indeed, does it not ginate "in here," in the age-old desire to orient oneself with respect to ce and time? The ancient Greeks, who invented the art of conversing gos) about the order of the world (cosmos), thought so. Assuming t earth and its inhabitants are of a piece with the heavens, they saw mology as the study of man's place in the grand scheme of things. ntrast this with the version promoted by physicists, a brilliant intel- tual edifice, to be sure, yet utterly vacant, a landmark in the architec- e of absence. Modern physical cosmology takes to extremes the mes- e voiced in the AIM tape: for solitude it substitutes nullification; for unnerving condition of being stranded, the absurd condition of not

awking's theories should not be confused with the Hawking phenomenon; that is, the ination nonscientists rightly have for a mute and immobile wheelchair-bound man would dare to tame the heavens by force of mind alone.

FOR DECADES, PHYSICISTS HAVE SERVED AS THE SELF-STYLED TOUR GUIDES OF THE UNIVERSE, MONOPOLIZED THE BULLHORN

IN THE GUISE OF COSMOLOGY, A LITTLE SOPHISTRY GOES A LONG WAY—TO THE OMEGA OF EXISTENCE AND BACK AGAIN

being present at all. THERE IS NO ONE HOME. Why listen to th weird rant? Why sit in silence, enduring a creation story that ove looks the part of the cosmos that lies within reach of o senses—the part that includes life, intelligent organism stargazers?

Certainly one reason we allow ourselves to be taken in by the tal Hawking and his fellow cosmologists tell is the pleasure provided by ment journeys. The mind delights in its own movement, and the action is migh thrilling in the worlds conjured up by science popularizers. It is no accide that almost every commercially successful layman's account finds a way transport us to places where, happily, anything is possible, including tim travel, interstellar travel, and excursions through alternative realities. Ne er mind that, like the endless permutations of *Star Trek,* all of this is mak believe—that the only release from the present is death, that the possibili of visiting another solar system before the species expires is so exceeding remote as to be nonexistent, that such exotic realms as black holes a universes of more than four dimensions are by definition closed to embo ied life forms. Never mind, in short, that we are earthlings.

We also seem prepared to applaud a creation story that overlooks life at some point during the drama a deity is rolled onstage. Two years ago, a press conference to announce the detection of faint fluctuations in the r diation left over from the Big Bang, astrophysicist George Smoot declare "It's like looking at God." Hawking, for his part, concluded *A Brief Histo of Time* by saying that discovering why the universe exists will be equiv lent to knowing "the mind of God." Even in clear-cut cases of metaphoric extravagance—remember "the God particle," the discovery of which was have shed light on how particles acquire mass?—the use of religious la guage in otherwise scientific discussions regarding the foundations of reali or the fate of the universe reinforces the impression that physicists enj privileged access to domains of ultimate importance, that they are the sec lar equivalent of the priest or shaman, capable of interceding between me mortals and the beyond, with the exception that their approach holds o the promise that one day eternity will be subject to public demonstration no small attraction in an age when fewer and fewer people seem willing make the leap that faith requires. Recently this trend reached its apotheo with the publication of *The Physics of Immortality,* in which Tulane Univ sity physicist Frank J. Tipler puts forward his Omega Point Theory, a mat ematical model of the end of the universe that he insists proves the ex tence not only of God but of heaven and the resurrection of the dead well. It is hard to say what is more pitiful here—the arrogance in the cla that one can reason one's way to immortality or the silliness in the noti that any deity worthy of respect would consent to appear as the outcome a mathematical equation. If Tipler has proven anything, it is that in t guise of cosmology a little sophistry truly goes a long way—in this case, the omega of existence and back again.

No matter. However vulgar or frivolous or downright fraudulent th are, explicit theological enticements give popular accounts of cosmolo something we very much want them to have. Our pantheons may be em ty but our hearts are not, and in our terrible longing we are quick to fall anything that so much as smells of divinity, even if the scent comes from bottle and wears off by morning. But there is another, far deeper sense which this longing operates, one that cosmology has always addresse though in its present, highly compelling form only since the 1970s.

Back then theoretical particle physicists were casting about for ways test the idea that three of the four fundamental forces in nature (electr magnetism and the strong and weak nuclear forces) are manifestations o more fundamental force. Although incomplete—gravity is excluded—t different versions of this notion are thought to be necessary steps tow developing a grand unified theory that governs everything in the univer

>al that has long been the holy grail of physics. But there was a hitch: test such sweeping theories with particle accelerators extremely high rgy levels are required, levels that have been reached only once—at dawning of the universe. So physicists turned to cosmology for evi- ce, albeit circumstantial, that would confirm their hunches, thereby rging the search for a unified theory with the attempt to describe the verse as a whole—two monumental ambitions made one. The alliance est represented today by Hawking, who explores the cosmic implica- ns of quantum mechanics, which concerns the vanishingly small, and eral relativity, which concerns the staggeringly large, in the hope of ding a single law to explain why everything is the way it is.

The quest for unity long predates science, of course, having been central he monogenetic myths of prehistoric and aboriginal peoples as well as he monotheistic religions that followed. In the Western intellectual tra- on it can be traced back to the pre-Socratic philosophers, who believed t there exists a universal stuff of which everything is made, and to Plato, o envisaged the *eide,* or Eternal Ideas, of which everything in existence ut a pale and perishable reflection. Theoretical physics, then, in which latter approaches have been employed to great effect, is a modern way ursuing a perennial interest: the quark, the most fundamental subatom- article discovered to date, is our version of the universal stuff whereas yet-to-be-realized unified theory, call it the final equation, stands as the nal template upon which all of nature's transient multiplicity is based.

But the empirical vocabulary in which discussions of the quark and the ation are couched tend to obscure the extent to which the idea of a ple, unifying order underlying all of existence is exactly that: *an idea,* whose persistence reveals the force of desire as much as it points to a ture of the world. In any form, the promise of unity engages a widely d, deep-seated longing. As manifest in physical cosmology, which nbines the search for the universal with the exploration of the uni- se, it engages us in spectacular fashion. Specifically, cosmology has ned itself with what was once the exclusive task of religion—tran- ndence, of the world at hand, the world we actually inhabit—because that is the only route to everlasting unity. Proving the existence of heaven is much beside the point; physical cosmology will escort us there.

How the modest device known as the scientific method could l to so immoderate a project as transcendence may not be obvious, but hat is needed is a willingness to push the method to extremes. Scientists required to erase themselves from the pictures they construct; at the ne of the perfect inquiry there should be no telltale fingerprints, no tracks ling back to the inquirer. Ideal science is a text without an author. The ventional way of putting this, of course, is that scientists aspire to objec- ty. They strive to produce descriptions of reality that are independent of biases of the individual scientist—to reveal the world as it is in itself. d the method works remarkably well. No one familiar with the accom- hments of twentieth-century science can deny its effectiveness.

Problems arise, however, when the scientific method is considered in- sically superior to all other ways of coming to grips with the world, be- se when elevated to that status the sleight of hand that makes it possi- becomes a liability. And what sleight of hand is that? Disguising the gins of the inquiry itself: pretending that it is something other than a quely human enterprise, that its very existence is not a manifestation of rests and values reflecting rarely examined prepossessions about the na- of truth and the nature of man. Although the whole of science is im- ated in this masquerade, it is easiest to detect in physical cosmology, re the most rigorous of the so-called hard sciences is placed in the ser- of attempts to apprehend the universe in a single glance.

magine: in a single glance. To do that, one would have to remove one-

COSMOLOGY HAS ALIGNED ITSELF WITH WHAT WAS ONCE THE EXCLUSIVE TASK OF RELIGION: TRANSCENDENCE AND UNITY



THE DEEPER ONE LOOKS INTO THE UNIVERSE, THE LESS ONE ACTUALLY SEES; THE OBJECT OF INQUIRY IS LOST TO SIGHT



self from the biggest picture of all—to back up far enough to view the co
mos from the outside. In effect one would have to become the ultima
outsider, the eye that sees everything. If truth is knowledge of the wor
unto itself, then to aspire to the truth of the entire universe is to aspire
nothing less than the position of God. Small wonder that the creation st
ry told in physical cosmology exercises a powerful hold on the imagir
tion. The usual ways the deity is invoked in contemporary territorial d
putes between science and religion—Does she exist? Did she have
choice in the way she set up the universe? Is she intervening at this m
ment?—pale alongside a god conceived as truth; for if one can, courtesy
cosmology, achieve transcendence, this is a god a human being can ho
to become. Meanwhile, awaiting blissful ascension, one can take comfo
in the belief that out there a divine point of view exists.

Be prepared to wait a long time, though. There is an unwritten ru
that applies to those who aspire to knowledge, one that has been illustra
ed with shocking force by performance artist Annie Sprinkle. Duri
mock stripteases in the early 1990s Sprinkle produced a speculum and i
vited audience members to take a closer look—at her cervix. Obviou
convinced that the times call for extreme measures, she left no dou
about her message: prurient interest is a type of abstraction by which t
cosmos that is a human being is reduced to a body part or a facet of h
havior. Moral issues aside, the lesson is that a speculum will not help o
get to know Annie Sprinkle, no more than a microscope will, or, for th
matter, a superconducting supercollider. Just the opposite is true: t
deeper one looks the *less* one sees; the object of inquiry is lost to sight,
it is for those who would fathom the universe by laying it bare. T
greater their insistence on uniformity, simplicity, permanence, the m
they are compelled to ignore what lies at hand: diversity, complexity, i
permanence. To gain unity they must forsake the world. Reaching for t
cosmos, they capture instead the quark.

The second strategy favored by physicists, patterned after Plato's p
scription for entering the realm of Ideas, requires an equally heavy sac
fice. Assume for the sake of argument that other women have join
Sprinkle onstage but that the intent—to get acquainted with her—
mains the same. Unlike his aggressive counterpart, the idealistic sui
prefers to contemplate his interest from afar, stepping back for a view th
will encompass the others as well. He wants to discover the fundamen
quality all women hold in common, *the* feminine principle, and by do
so also identify what, to his mind, is most real about Sprinkle—th
which is timeless. But she will remain a stranger to him. In shifting his
tention from the particular to the general, the theoretician alienates hi
self from what makes Sprinkle Sprinkle—her individuality, her spec
history, her ambiguity and fatality, everything that distinguishes her fr
other women, other people, other creatures, other phenomena. Sett
out to possess the world, he acquires instead an Idea of the world, the
tire kingdom of existence in exchange for a meager equation.

In practice, then, the quest for unity produces not transcendence but
trangement. And it could not be otherwise, because wherever one sta
one occupies a position inside a worldview as well as inside the cosm
creature of a twofold creation. We can no more climb outside our o
minds than we can travel to an Archimedean point beyond the edge
the universe. The belief in transcendence is perhaps the most sub
worldview yet contrived, because by pretending to be something ot
than a worldview it suggests the prospect of a picture that paints itsel
centerless cosmology—which, however, is no less fictional than the g
centric cosmos Copernicus overturned some three hundred years ago. I
spite claims to objectivity, physics is a sophisticated, highly specialized
tempt to humanize the world, and that suggests why the creation st
told in mainstream physical cosmology remains compelling despite
sterility. Earth, organisms, people—these may receive little or no not

ut just the same we are very much present, in the idea of unity, a sure sign f human authorship. The story assumes the exact shape of our longing. Ve, alone among creatures, wake to a world gone to pieces, and we alone try to put it back together again—in our maps and metaphors, in the way, essentially, that we talk about it. We, you must admit, are an odd bunch.

"Every anomaly seduces us," writes E. M. Cioran, "life in the rst place, that anomaly par excellence." In fairness it must be pointed out iat science wisely sidesteps questions it cannot answer, especially those re-arding the singular event and the one-of-a-kind object, because they are ie least amenable to its methods, which hinge on repeatability. This is hy physics, were it to try to apprehend the likes of Annie Sprinkle, would void the fluid and multivalent middle range of phenomena and move to-ard the extremes—the quark or the equation. This also is why biology, as-iring to the condition of physics, would focus on, say, this or that gene se-uence in trying to explain Sprinkle's stage behavior or, better still, the ay audience members respond to her behavior. Knowledge of the kind sci-nce seeks does not come by way of seduction. Science knows well its own mits, although some scientists, bless their hearts, seem not to.

Take the handful of renegade physicists who have tried to restore life to position of importance in cosmology. Two of their scenarios warrant con-deration. Design is central to the first scenario, called the anthropic prin-iple, which makes much of the fact that the universe displays exactly the haracteristics necessary for the existence of beings like us. To proponents f the anthropic principle, like Tipler and John Barrow, this suggests that fe was meant to be, that organisms were part of the plan from the start. To ie it suggests that dogs are not alone in chasing their own tails. What kind f a universe could we occupy except one that is fine-tuned for our exis-ence? One might as well claim that salmon are latent in seawater.

The other scenario turns on what is sometimes called the observer effect. ccording to the standard interpretation of quantum mechanics, in a sub-tomic system quantities like position and momentum lack definitive val-es until they are measured. Paradoxical, yes, but it works remarkably well. he goofiness starts when this special-purpose mathematical tool is used to uild an entire metaphysical framework, as John Wheeler, who coined the rm "black hole," has tried to do. In the absence of an intelligent observer, ie reasoning goes, said physical system has no observable traits; it really oes not exist. And if this is so then we, or some other beings or Being, iust be necessary to the existence of all physical systems—indeed, the uni-erse overall—because it is only through being observed that what does ex-t could exist. Whoa. But for the jargon, this view would be indistinguish-ble from sympathetic magic. One of the most sophisticated ideas of mod-rn science is here debased to New Age malarkey, providing aid and com-ort to the reality-is-what-you-think-it-is crowd.

Physical scientists who set foot on the shores of life tend to view their ew surroundings through the lens they know best, which in their case ieans in terms of the rules and requirements of the physical sciences. If iis is a flaw, however, it is an unavoidable one. To ask physicists to leave ieir conceptual prejudices at home would be to strip them of their prima-y means of seeing. But it is crucial to remember that most of the cosmos iat is available to direct experience consists of exceptions to those rules, ot in the sense that they contradict the rules—they most certainly do ot—but in the deeper sense that they could never be predicted or even inimally explained by them. Where we reside is a shifting sea of anom-ly. If we desire from cosmology something more than trivial intimations f divinity or an ancient religious impulse reflected back to us in abstract rm—that pallid god, oneness—we must make room for organisms, histo-y, consciousness. We must allow ourselves to be seduced. That will re-uire an inversion of the present arrangement: no longer would astronom-

IF WE DESIRE FROM COSMOLOGY MORE THAN INTIMATIONS OF DIVINITY, WE MUST MAKE ROOM FOR ORGANISMS, HISTORY

WHEN WE GRASP THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE, WE GLIMPSE THE EQUALLY VAST INTERIOR OF THE SOUL

ical findings and ideas in theoretical physics set the boundaries of cosmology but instead they would be subsumed within a larger, extrascientific approach. At the same time, physicists would be stripped of their bullhorns and special vestments, their reign as reality brokers at long last brought to an end. We would shift our emphasis from trying to discern the structure of the universe to trying to reckon our place within that structure, the stargazer becoming the starting point in the quest to apprehend the stars. This is not as far-fetched as it might seem.

Late that night on the South Fork of the Salmon River I underwent an experience at odds with the Big Bang and black hole script that usually rings in our ears when we ponder the night sky. Like anyone under those circumstances, I was impressed most by the sheer scale of what lay before my eyes, but at the same time I was made aware of something else, a stirring inside my chest that was no less real, no less inspiring than the stars overhead. What I felt was not diminishment but dilation. My whole being expanded; I felt intensely alive, on the verge of a momentous revelation. And I think I know why. Precisely when we grasp the vastness of the universe we also glimpse an equally vast interior, the enormous geography of the soul, so to speak. Words may fail us afterward, forcing us to rely on hackneyed descriptions that emphasize our insignificance, but what we actually sense, if only for an instant, is largeness of spirit.

At that moment I began to appreciate another intriguing passage from the AIM tape: WITHOUT EARTH THERE IS NO HEAVEN. By giving up the vain attempt to achieve a god's-eye view of the world, we find that the most pressing fact of existence is not that we are alone in the dark but that we are alive; not that the cosmos is empty but that it is incarnate, right here, in this garden among the galaxies we call Earth. What's more, we realize that who we are and where we find ourselves are two sides of the same coin. We are aware of the stars only because we have evolved a corresponding interior space—the domain of mind and language—in which stars can be reflected, and in whose absence the cosmos would exist but cosmology would not. WITHOUT EARTH THERE IS NO HEAVEN. We now know that we do not occupy the center of the universe, but we sometimes forget that we will always stand at the center of our picture of the universe. That is our lot as conscious beings. The rightful axis of cosmology is therefore the human mind and, by extension, the plexus of life from which it arises. As language-using organisms, we participate in the evolution of the universe most fruitfully through interpretation. We come to grips with the world by drawing pictures, telling stories, conversing. These acts are our special contribution to existence—we make cosmologies. To have a workable cosmology is to be at home in the cosmos. To be in the process of creating a cosmology, a more common situation in a secular age, is to be traveling toward home.

The story told by physical cosmologists is only one of many interpretations of the universe, powerful under certain circumstances but scarcely exhausting all of the ways we might profitably describe reality. No less fertile are the worldviews of life scientists whose sensibilities have been shaped by the study of natural history and ecology. Despite a decades-long process of capitulation, during which biology, striving for certainty, largely abandoned fieldwork among organisms and ecosystems for laboratory experiments on genes and cells, some fearless life scientists continue to struggle with the big mysteries of the universe—contingency, individuality, transformation, time, any of which makes corralling a quark seem like child's play. Consequently, they have a great deal more to say about being *alive* in the cosmos than do those who call themselves cosmologists.

And scientists are far from alone in developing valid ways of "feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos," as William James put it. Poets and plumbers have as much right to speak for the world as do physicists

and paleontologists. Indeed, in certain instances—facing death, say, or when the water is rising above one's knees—adopting the poet's or plumber's view of the cosmos makes much more sense. Not all worldviews are equally useful or uplifting, of course, but that in no way justifies a hierarchy in which science is considered intrinsically superior to other ways of apprehending reality. To take leave of science is not necessarily to take leave of the facts, for there is no fact that is not also the work of desire. In theoretical physics the ideal fact accords with our longing for unity—a sublime ambition, yes, but one whose satisfaction entails the sacrifice of all that is tangible, all that we hold dear.

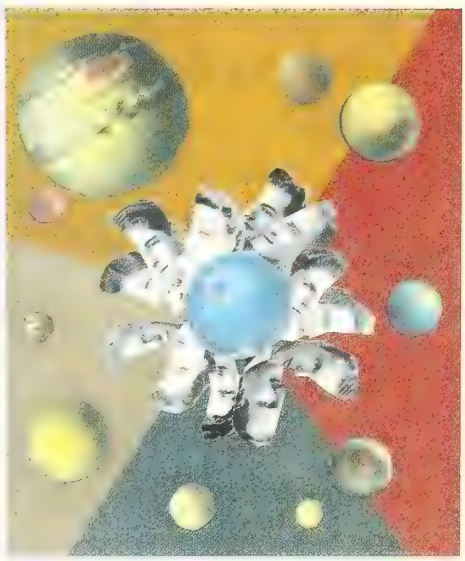
Today we live under a prohibition against the wanton commingling of fact and desire, and understandably so. In the past this unholy alliance bred paralyzing superstition and, when vested with power, enslavement, pain, and death. But it is no less superstitious to think we can separate fact and desire. Besides, the difficulty lies not with the way we come by our worldviews, a process that always will be problematic, but with the way we make them felt, whether we employ force or persuasion. What is most exemplary about science is that at its best it proceeds by means of discourse and justification, an approach all human beings should encourage. What we should resist, however, is the belief in absolute truths that can be grasped whole, a fiction that has outlived its usefulness.

What is the alternative? I wish to suggest something that might be called enlightened anthropomorphism, by which human thought is measured primarily by how widely it ranges, not how closely it approximates the truth, by its amplitude instead of its verisimilitude. In cosmology this would seem to give credence to any crackpot who wants to hold forth on the universe, no matter how cockamamie his ideas. And in a sense it does, because the only credential that should be needed to enter any conversation about the nature of the world is one's humanity. Who's to say who is a crackpot? None of us is qualified to make that judgment. None of us is capable of pronouncing the last word on anything but the furnishings of our own minds, and even that is debatable. This is why we best serve the cause of truth by expanding and defending the domain in which thought is free to roam, by opposing any attempt to restrict human expression, from outright persecution to arbitrary initiation rites and membership rules, like those imposed in the name of scientific objectivity.

Picturing the search for knowledge in this way—in pragmatic rather than epistemological terms—may seem odd at first, but the switch in perspective leads to a liberating cosmology. By admitting that all creation stories are in significant measure anthropomorphic, we finally assume full responsibility for what we say, no longer pretending that our utterances have the blessing of an extrahistorical authority. In effect, we transform the cosmic quest from the elitist, solitary contemplation of the stars into a free-for-all conversation about the stars with other human beings, scientist and nonscientist alike. No gods, no priests, no conclusions, but—and this is the best part—everyone has a place at the table, an aluminum chair before the campfire, or, if you share my taste for Irish whiskey, a stool at the bar. The heart of this cosmology is a heightened sense of our shared condition and fate, our singular and precarious place in the universe. We need not love, much less understand, other human beings to realize that they too suffer, that they are conscious of their mortality, that a longing burns inside them, that they have their own maps and metaphors.

For the moment, and perhaps only for the moment, we find ourselves at the center of all cosmologies, not because the species is more intelligent or more powerful or more significant than any other but because we alone are capable of giving voice to the cosmos; it is our immense good fortune and grave responsibility to sing the songs of creation. ■

NONE OF US IS CAPABLE OF PRONOUNCING THE LAST WORD ON ANYTHING BUT THE FURNISHINGS OF OUR OWN MINDS



It was as cold and bitter as any winter getting around Key We

After surviving twenty-one blizzard-filled Indiana winters, Pam Tomlinson thought she'd said good-bye to slippery conditions. But then last winter the weather took a nasty turn down in paradise.

Why, it even dipped into the low fifties a couple of times. *Brrrrrr.*

That's not quite the weather they had in Hoosier country. But don't tell that to Pam. She bought a Saturn with traction control — the feature that helps our cars hold everything from an icy South Bend freeway to a slick South Florida causeway.

And that's exactly what Pam has to deal with when the rains come and she's making her frequent four-hour commutes to Miami for her job as a flight attendant. Or even if she's navigating the Key Deer National Refuge near where she lives.

If the tires don't hug U.S. 1, Pam's in trouble. To say nothing of the deer.

No, Pam's not crazy. Even if the only thing that's frozen in Florida is the orange juice, she gets plenty of use out of the traction control and accompanying anti-lock brakes. And the sunroof? That's nice, too. Hey, the weather isn't all bad down there.



Survivalist Pam Tomlinson bought her Saturn from Mike Prentice at Saturn of Dadeland in Miami.



In rain, sleet, snow, or even an unexpected patch of coconut oil, Saturn's traction control system helps reduce wheel slippage during acceleration



by adjusting engine spark timing, transmission gears, and fuel controls. And to think, it is included on every Saturn equipped with automatic transmission and anti-lock brakes. Not bad, considering that a comparable traction control system can add upwards of $1,000 to the price of some luxury cars.

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THE IMMACULATE INVASION

In Haiti, U.S. troops deploy the illusion of democracy

By Bob Shacochis

I: THE WAY IN

SEPTEMBER 17–24, 1994

The ticking of the Pentagon's clock has reached an unmistakable decibel level, and for anyone who wants to get into Haiti *now*, there are the lucky few and the unlucky many. A handful of government-selected pool reporters will be coming in with the troops, issued helmets and flak jackets, and helicoptered ashore; thrown, intimately but anonymously, into whatever midnight horror or glory awaits the landing force. Everybody else—hundreds of journalists from around the globe—will have to find their way onto an island ostensibly under a red alert, its air and sea routes disconnected, its mountainous border with the Dominican Republic watched by uniformed criminals, and its countryside controlled by paramilitary militias armed with machetes and guns.



By September 17, the travel agencies ferrying the media from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic to Port-au-Prince, a sweltering daylong journey, are overwhelmed; the sunbaked border crossing at Jimani clogged with harried legions of reporters, photographers, cameramen, technical crews, fixers, and produ ers, their gear measuring by the ton and foug over by bands of screaming porters; the ro gridlocked with convoys of vans and flatb trucks hauling satellite dishes, generators, wa house loads of electronics, lighting and sou equipment, videotape, and bottled water; eve body slick with sweat, pissed off, and verbalizi in half a dozen languages, peeling hundred-d lar bills off th bankrolls (ten gra in hard cash, mi mum, if you are wo ing for a major ne organization), a each one of them termined to be t next guy through, beat the troops i Haiti, to pass throu the looking glass i the surreal, top turvy world of war.

I, too, am desperate get in, and for days I languish in Santo Domin trying to get my documents in order, hear about attempts by other reporters to buy t way in, about the Dominican soldiers wear CBS caps, about the three Agence Pre Français reporters who, after bribing the Hait border guards a thousand bucks each (all bri by nature nonrefundable), were turned back on reaching the first police checkpoint on road to Port-au-Prince. Or about Ed Barn *Time*'s war correspondent, who, with two ot journalists, was nabbed sneaking over the bo

Bob Shacochis, a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine, *is the author of two short-story collections,* Easy in th lands *and* The Next New World, *and a novel,* Swimming in the Volcano. *His last piece for* Harper's, *on h canes, appeared in the September 1991 issue.*

Photograph by Alon Reininger/Contact

Pedernales, a more obscure crossing on Haiti's uth coast, and returned at gunpoint to the ard post where, for twenty minutes, Haitian diers discussed the pros and cons of accepting rnes's offer of a massive bribe before marching e trio back across no-man's-land. *You've got to kidding,* Ed protested, *the most corrupt country the world and we can't buy our way in? This is cking outrageous.*

In Santo Domingo, I hear the border is osed, the border's open; the border's never en closed, it's only become more unpre-ctable, all you need is a visa from the Haitian mbassy; good thing you didn't go to the border sterday, serious trouble up there, amigo—the aitians are robbing and arresting reporters.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Carter has looked into e eyes of General Raoul Cedras's wife, cut e deal, and the marines have landed at the rfield in Port-au-Prince and are standing ound waiting, ripening anxiously in the sun. few days later, in the smoky twilight of the ernoon, I arrive by bus at the postapocalyp- outskirts of Port-au-Prince, having traveled e breadth of the Haitian countryside without otting any sign of the U.S. military occupa-on. At first glance, nothing much has anged, I decide, since my first visit to Haiti 1986, when I reported on the aftermath of e *dechoukaj,* the nationwide rebellion that sted Baby Doc Duvalier and the regime's ramilitary enforcers, the Tonton Macoutes. ast areas of the cityscape seem constructed t of shortcuts and makeshift solutions, erect- by the homeless for the homeless, creating e smoldering architectural temperament of a eam constantly solicited and constantly de-rred, competing chronologies of decay arbi-rily overshadowed by the paternalism of the vernment ministries, the neocolonial fraud their timelessness, imposing facades flaking ustard-colored paint chips onto unkempt wns. Unlike Havana, neglect has not reward- Port-au-Prince with its own aesthetic, yet e city possesses a survivor's elan.

As we near the international airport, the bus ems momentarily swallowed up by a polter-ist, pitching and vibrating with a concussive ythm churned down on us from a covey of ackhawk helicopters dawdling overhead. In nt of us, the roadside flow of pedestrians has agulated along a cinder-block wall, and there now an unfamiliar weight in the air, a ange tension of violently mixed emotion—ppressed hate, rapture, disbelief, fear—and re, finally, are the troops, armed to the nines d hunkered down beneath sandbag igloos ng the perimeter of the airfield, their hel-eted faces nervously scanning the crowd, hich stares back with hyper-focused inertia, mesmerized, as if the marines are walrus and this is a movie. I stare, too, never having seen an American soldier in full battle dress, let alone seventeen thousand of them deployed in a theater of operation.

We pass on into the downtown neighborhoods, eerily empty, the streets banked high with rotting garbage, wandered by pariah dogs and pigs; then we turn away from the harbor and its flotilla of U.S. warships to ascend, with nightfall, the incongruously named Avenue John Brown toward the sweeter air of Pétionville, the notorious suburb of privilege, carved into the mountainside above the darkening city. Within ten minutes I stand in the illuminated lobby of the Montana Hotel, space-warped into an après-beach party, gawking at the throng of media celebs, the Eddie Bauer tropical-fashion show, the crush of machos at the bar in shorts and network caps, looking as if they've spent their day playing softball. On the patio, CNN is feeding a satellite; in the lounge, a big-screen TV broadcasts the Michigan-Colorado game. Reporters for the dailies stand in line at the phone links, computers in hand; when I find my way downstairs to the apartment rented by the *Miami Herald,* where I've been offered sleeping space on the floor, three *Herald* reporters, Susan Benesch, Peter Slevin, and Yves Colon, are similarly engaged, seated around a dining room table, hushed and intent, squinting at their screens, trying to make deadline. I dump my bags and sink wordlessly into a chair.

PORT-AU-PRINCE HAS THE SMOLDERING APPEARANCE OF A DREAM CONSTANTLY SOLICITED AND CONSTANTLY DEFERRED

Reservations for dinner are made. The embargo's impact on one's opportunity for fine dining in Pétionville is zero. Souvenance, the restaurant of choice for the capital's aristocracy of crisis (the politicians and millionaires, the well-heeled gangsters, the diplomats and journalists), is booked up, and so we settle for the gastronomic artistry of the chef at La Plantation, where the clientele can fill their glasses with the best French wines to toast the continuing—and, in some cases, karmically inexplicable—miracle of their survival.

Except for the hotels, the military barracks (or casernes, as they're called in Haiti), and those homeowners who can afford a generator, the entire country has gone without electricity for months. I ride with Yves and Peter through the blacked-out labyrinth of streets, slowly resigning myself to the fact that I am terrified to be moving about the city's corpse-strewn nighttime. We become lost, make a wrong turn, and

end up on the concrete apron of a police substation. Somebody lurches into our headlights, raising a rifle. "Back up," I hear myself pleading, but Yves calmly rolls down his window and asks for directions.

At the restaurant, I marvel at how, given the tropical latitudes, one glamorous venue is much like the next. We could be in Coral Gables or St. Tropez, but instead we are in Haiti; and what the ruling class cannot seem to grasp, either in 1986 or in 1994, is that if, after a coup d'état, the incoming regime had exhibited one trait more mature than the insatiable egocentrism of infants, one guiding principle more enlightened than avarice or venality, if they had only bothered themselves to do one thing for Haiti more constructive than exert authoritarian control—just *one:* fixed a pothole, picked up the trash—then Aristide would be history, Cedras wouldn't be looking for real estate in Panama, the marines would be back at Camp Lejeune, and the putschists would still be riding high in the saddle, robbing and killing to their hearts' content, running drugs, stowing millions into offshore accounts. But no lust is as beguiling, no mistress as treacherous, as unmitigated self-interest.

AFTER ONE WEEK, THE CAPITAL HAS NOT YET AFFORDED ITSELF THE LUXURY OF IMAGINING IT HAS BEEN LIBERATED

On the way out, someone recognizes the acting prime minister's deputy, and, pausing at his table, we learn that while we've been at the restaurant, a marine patrol in Cap-Haitien, the country's second-largest city, five hours north, has opened fire on police headquarters. The Immaculate Invasion now has a body count. Ten.

II. INSIDE THE *MANIFESTATION*

SEPTEMBER 25–30, 1994

After a week's occupation, the capital has not yet afforded itself the highly combustible luxury of imagining it has been liberated. Just what are the Americans up to? everyone wants to know. It is as if the United States believes that the mere presence of its armed forces is somehow therapeutic. For months the generals have been pumped up for an invasion, high-tech slaughter, another victory for the microchip, and at the last conceivable second have been told to change the software, uncock the gun—but go ahead anyway and try not to break things. That the Atlantic Command might need a few days to reshape its thinking to this unprecedented circumstance is certainly reasonable to assume. But what is the causal relationship between role and pace? Why, as th timetable expands, does the mission seem t shrink? Even post-Carter, isn't this still Oper tion Uphold Democracy? Okay, so everybo from Clinton on down through the chain command is winging it, yet no one is askin General Cedras to fall on his sword, let alon beat it into a plowshare, and the immuni granted his various legions of thugs seems, i explicably, unlimited, as long as no one poin a gun at a kid from Kansas. The Americans, appears, are practicing an abnormally benig form of coercion, as if finesse alone will win th day and the dictatorship will dismantle itse because it is the right thing to do.

In Port-au-Prince, no one can say for certa what is going on. The city squirms, its eagerne to abandon the deaf-and-dumb act tempered b profound distrust. The generals remain u scathed, the soldiers of the Haitian militar Forces Armed de Haiti (FADH), inhabit the casernes, the police play dominoes in their st tions, and the Front for the Advancement a Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), the paramilita militia masquerading as a nationalistic politic party, still owns the streets. FRAPH—a fa right organization with a widely reported link the CIA—is to the regime what the Brow Shirts were to Hitler—provocateurs, terroris Meanwhile, the Americans drive past in th Humvees without stopping, the marines are r luctant to come away from the waterfront a airfield, and you never see a soldier after da when the Macoutes and other assassins mate alize like vampires to hunt their prey. Becau of the Americans, the world seems suspended volatility, neither what it was nor what it i tends to be once Father Jean-Bertrand Aristi returns, if he ever does.

On my first morning, I venture with Yv and two other reporters into the festering sl of Cité Liberté, the address of many of the tachés—the illegally deputized plainclothes p lice auxiliaries serving the regime as hit men. is an odious honeycomb of colorless bloc connected by a grid of dirt alleys, where letl games of hide-and-seek are a nightly occu rence. My level of apprehension is mod compared with what we now observe on t faces of a platoon of U.S. soldiers, one of t first foot patrols dispatched into the city, bait trying to walk down the street. Escorted the noisy crowd—hundreds of people—the s diers rotate their bodies like automatons, so walking backward, some straight ahead, th eyes stark with fear, their rifles leveled for ing. Yesterday's killing of ten policemen Cap-Haitien becomes easy to visualize. "Ha you seen anybody carrying weapons aroun one of the soldiers asks the crowd, not realizi



that the question itself is a form of incitement. "Yes!" everybody screams in unison. The names of the guilty become a tangle in the air.

An hour later I am sitting in the backseat of Ed Barnes's four-wheel-drive Mitsubishi (rented for $2,500 a month) with Gary, our creole interpreter; Susan and Ed are up front, and we are headed out of town. Our reckless five-hour drive north coincides exactly with the collapse of the Haitian state, invisible from within Port-au-Prince yet increasingly evident and lively as we drive farther into its exorcism. Rounding the shoreline of the immense blue gulf responsible for the open-jaw shape of Haiti, we pass on our left a mangrove swamp that reeks with muddy decay; on our right, sad denuded highlands, eroding into the sea. Gas is plentiful in the cities despite the embargo, though its black-market price—$15 a gallon—discourages all but the most affluent or desperate. Except for an infrequent taxi, known locally as a tap-tap, clinging with passengers and piled high with cargo, we soon have the road to ourselves, though the roadsides are another matter, a continuous stream of farmers astride donkeys, women with buckets and pans balanced on their heads, bicycling teenagers, ragged children, chickens and goats and cowering dogs.

For a few miles the road hugs the coast, and we race past turquoise water, postcard beaches that once hosted a long-defunct tourist industry, past a Club Med abandoned for most of a decade. Then the road takes us inland to the more familiar habitations of the masses—mud-and-wattle huts with thatched roofs, densely built in tribal clusters; two-room block houses with tin roofs; clapboard shanties—and finally to the city of St.-Marc, where we are greeted with puzzled but nevertheless instinctive respect by the uniformed policemen manning their checkpoint; they do not try to stop us as we barely slow to weave through their barrier of oil drums positioned across the road. On the opposite side of town, the highway rolls us out into the Artibonite Valley, Haiti's breadbasket, its vast expanse of malarial rice paddies ready for harvest by the peasant collectives.

The richness of the land, however, exists in inverse proportion to the impoverishment of the road, Route 100, the main artery between Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien, constructed by the U.S. Marine Corps in the 1920s. This morning a CBS film crew has overturned its vehicle trying to swerve through the splatter of axle-breaking craters. I have never traveled a road in greater disrepair, its bed so severely exposed that the pavement appears to have been the target of low-altitude cluster bombing.

Photograph by Klaus Reisinger/Black Star

Where the irrigated plains end, the arid, treeless *savanne desolee* begins, a Nevada-like vista surrounding the equally destitute ugliness of Gonaïves, a city impossible to imagine ever being beautiful, regardless of its historic importance—home to Haiti's two-hundred-year-old revolution, site of the 1985 uprising that became the *dechoukaj* but never came close to defeating Duvalierism. Approaching Gonaïves's central crossroads, we can see the intersection blocked by several thousand people, who react as though they've been waiting all day for our arrival. Unable to go on, we are mobbed by cheering demonstrators, the heat of their jubilation pressing in on us, and I am momentarily unnerved by their crush, the passionate intensity of their dancing, of which we seem to be the sole catalyst. I scan the side streets, half expecting the FADH to materialize and start shooting people. "We are liberated," the crowd sings in a single, chanting voice. "Long live the Americans! Long live Aristide!" They



want us to follow them up the street; the demonstration doubles in size as we park in front of the FADH caserne, where, to our surprise, we are welcomed by Major Mark O'Neill, the commanding officer of the 105 Special Forces soldiers who yesterday took over the town. O'Neill, relaxed and amused, Gonaïves's new king of carnival, has to shout to be heard above the crowd, which grows more raucous by the second, taunting the unarmed Haitian soldiers who stand sullenly at the entrance to the barracks.

"I'll tell you," says Major O'Neill, smiling broadly. "The Haitian soldiers are as nervous as a cat on a hot tin roof. I told the Haitian commander here I'd do the same thing the marines did up in Cap, and that energized him to put the word out not to carry weapons. I'm here to stop Haitian-on-Haitian violence, whoever it is. If I find anyone carrying a firearm, I'll take that gun and shove it up his ass, sir."

O'Neill beams, even as the crowd grows bolder, and he sends a combat-ready trio of his men out front to pacify them. Despite his nonchalance, the major has to acknowledge the high probability for chaos in Gonaïves, which is why he is in no rush to run around disarming attachés. He controls everything from the city out into the central district, and right now he is ready to sleep with the devil, he says, to maintain order. "I don't get paid extra for glory." You can almost smell the soap on O'Neill; he is that clean, that happy, out here in the Third World being of use to mankind.

I feel as if I am standing at the center of a fabulous though potentially fatal eruption, battered by euphoria. Nor does this sensation wane as we continue onward, ascending into the spectacular mountains of the north, but instead is renewed, again and again, at the heart of each village and town we enter, each successive population thronging the road to cheer us, as if it has fallen to us to ignite the fires of their celebration, as if *we* have somehow saved them. Ed Barnes, who during the Gulf War witnessed the liberation of Kuwait City, can't help but notice the parallels—the deserted checkpoints; the abandoned police posts; the dazed assemblies clogging the road, pinching themselves awake at the sight of us, white and foreign, then roaring with screams of elation, the effect like spontaneous combustion; and the air throbbing with drums and horns, the primitive atonal music of the *bands a pie*. We begin waving back like dignitaries, shamelessly saluting the *manifestations* with raised fists. I won't deny the element of self-preservation in my motive, since I saw these same youthful flocks, in these same rural towns, blocking these same stretches of road in 1986, only the boys were armed with machetes then and not so happy.

Which, incidentally, is the mood of the mob we encounter after we pass through the colonial gates of Cap-Haitien, the city once touted by the French as the Paris of the New World, now a virtual junk heap, wrecked by decades of criminal neglect. Several blocks before the first roundabout, we come to a halt on the edge of pandemonium: a large agitated crowd and, at its convulsive core, a knot of berserk men screaming in creole, "Lie down flat! Lie down flat!" Susan and Ed climb out on the roof of the Mitsubishi for a better look. The people have caught an attaché and are ripping him to pieces; we can see the red cap of his bloody skull, distinct among the sea of angry faces lurching forward like a deer being brought

Photograph by Philippe Diederich/Contact Press

own by a pack of wolves. "Lie down flat!" the rowd demands, savoring its power to say these eartless words, the same command customari- given by attachés before they put a bullet in ne back of your head. Ahead, across from the undabout, we now can see three armored per- onnel carriers in T formation and manned by platoon of clench-jawed marines, their M-16s eveled, the carriers' mounted machine guns ained on the crowd, the gunners wide-eyed as ne mob inches toward their position, cor- oned off with razor-sharp loops of concertina ire, clubbing and pummeling its victim, swip- ng at him with machetes until he manages to umble to the wire, where the troops pull him n as he collapses to his knees, raining blood.

"*Viv le demokrasi!*" the people shout. Two of ne avengers have wrapped themselves in merican flags. Others wave swatches of the laitian red and blue—France's tricolor flag ith the white symbolically removed. With the n about to set, the colors glow, the dread be- omes buoyancy, and to me the city's ambience ouldn't possibly be more profound—old gods ppling into the dirt.

With newfound exuberance, hundreds of peo- le press around our car, singing, removing pic- ures of Aristide from their Bibles, their wallets, estifying, denouncing. "A policeman actually ade me eat my own shit." "There's an attaché amed Champagne. He has weapons. You must o get him." They take it as an article of faith nat we are inseparable from the force in the orld that has been sent by God to deliver them om evil, and I suppose that is more true than I m willing to admit; as I look into their black ces, their hope is so thorough and consuming frightens me. Traffic begins to move again, nd we advance deeper into the lawless city, its oid of civic amenities, its locked gas stations nd grim warehouses, an open-air market selling very bicycle ever thrown away or stolen in Mi- mi. A few blocks from the harbor, we park in- de the high walls of the Hotel Roi Christophe, former palace built for Pauline Bonaparte hen Napoleon sent his brother-in-law and an rmy of sixty-five thousand men to put down laiti's slave rebellion.

The ride north has been like five hours on a echanical bull, and now we want to walk. Su- n and I go around the corner, heading for the entral plaza, one side of it occupied by the ADH garrison, which we soon learn was ormed by a mob earlier in the day. Its five- undred-man contingent of Haitian soldiers ore off their own uniforms and disappeared in- o the slums, fearing that the marines would ome on the heels of the crowd, as they had ne previous night at the police headquarters, nd shoot them dead. Come they did, but too late to prevent the demonstrators from trashing the caserne. The American guards posted behind the barred gates are wired, anticipating nightfall. All afternoon people have been bringing them weird booty: officers' uniforms straight from the dry cleaners; bag-like hoods used during torture sessions.

Susan and I continue on, hoping by chance to interview the Haitian commander of the entire northern region, Lieutenant Colonel Josaphat, who resides in the handsome estate house under the palm trees on the opposite end of the plaza. The light, like a Flemish painting's, seems golden-brown and heavy. We make a right turn onto the lane that passes in front of Josaphat's place and stop in front of an extraordinary roadblock, constructed out of dented tubas, a disassembled trombone, a trombone case, and palm fronds. Behind Josaphat's wrought-iron fence, a marine hunkers down in a pod of sandbags, manning a machine gun set on a tripod.

THE CROWDS TAKE IT AS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH THAT WE ARE INSEPARABLE FROM THE FORCE SENT BY GOD TO DELIVER THEM

"Keep moving," he says. "You can't stand there."

But Colonel Josaphat isn't there, he isn't anywhere; he has slipped away like a serpent into the bush, betrayed by the universe. Begging the gunner's patience, we stare for another minute at the mystery of the brass roadblock, then wander into the dreamland of the plaza's shady park, its lawn whitened by a snowfall of sheet music, thousands and thousands of yellowed, hand-ruled pages increasing in density until we are wading in them ankle-deep, coming to a bandstand in the center of the green, its wooden closet busted open and spewing antique scores. I stoop to pick up a handful: "That's My Hap-Hap-Happiness"; "Anchors Aweigh" for alto saxophone; the "U.S. Field Artillery March," lovingly penned in india ink. Haiti, framed at both ends of the twentieth century by the music of military occupation.

Night brings total darkness—no electricity, no phones, no water in the city. We take the last two rooms at the Christophe. A generator coughs into operation, bringing light until 10:30; Henri, the proprietor, finds an aluminum ladder for Susan, who sets up her satellite phone on the roof. We order dinner—the choice is beef or lobster—shower cold, and sit on the tiled terrace to eat, pampered by a sweet romantic breeze and contraband beer. Outside in the darkness the air be-

guns to compress; the ice water in our glasses trembles. The American helicopter seems to originate in my subconscious; but then it is suddenly there, close above us but unseen, an airborne locomotive with a voice—some psy-ops wizard broadcasting a screech of comforts and warnings: *All is well. We've come to help you. Stay in your houses. If you hear noise in the night, don't come out.* In the morning, a few blocks down from the hotel, there is a man in the street, beaten to death during the night.

A few hours later, I stand in the anteroom of Cap-Haitien's newly liberated prison. Outside, in the courtyard, a column of smoke rises from a mound of documents and files: records of arrests. People drag us eagerly from cell to cell, pantomiming the miseries endured: *Here they would burn you alive, here they would beat you with batons, here they would cut you.* The tiny cement rooms are windowless, smell of urine, and contain sad curls of shit. Scratched into the grimy walls are graffiti, mostly prayers and day counts, names of lovers—drawings executed with lumps of charcoal: Baron Samedi with top hat and frock coat, lord of the cemetery. The parade ground is scattered with rubbish, junked cars, things smashed long ago. Women fill plastic jugs at a water pipe; in the barracks, people tear out every last piece of wood, indifferent to the furious sputtering harangue of an organizer from Lavalas, the grass-roots political movement that swept Aristide into power in 1990. "Don't do *dechoukaj*," he shrieks, "because Lavalas gets blamed for it. If you *dechouke* the prison, you're the same as the attachés, you put a bad image on Aristide." Then, as if he were invincible, L'Overture, a notorious Macoute, saunters forward to proclaim he would rather lose his mother than have Aristide come back to the country. His hubris is breathtaking—people step back from him, their faces averted, their eyes gone blank. "He's too strong," someone mutters. "Too strong."

NOW I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM IN A WAR ZONE WITHOUT THE WAR—MORE THAN AN EXERCISE, LESS THAN COMBAT

At the police substation next to the city gates, the doors are askew on their hinges, windows unshuttered. Street kids have the run of the building, and I am spellbound by their matinee performance, a spontaneous opéra bouffe: they've donned calabash-shell helmets and brandish make-believe rifles. Pounding a desktop with his fist, their "commander" rages into a toy phone, making flamboyant gestures of intolerance; his arrogant aide-de-camp transmits from an imaginary radio while on the veranda the troupe conducts mock beatings to the general amusement of the crowd watching from across the street, prevented only by their timidity from joining the fun. In a tyrannized population, it's the felicitous spirit of the imagination that first springs free, giddy and victorious, on the day of liberation.

Along the unpaved road to Grande Rivière du Nord, forty-five minutes southeast of Cap, attack helicopters swoop low overhead, casting dragon shadows on the green hillsides, rising and dipping with the contour of the land. *There's going to be trouble,* we say to ourselves, knowing only that teams of marines are doing quick strikes throughout the countryside, disarming the casernes. Now I understand I am in a war zone without the war, more than an exercise, less than combat—a tricky, high-stakes, ill-defined game between superior American forces and a multilayered, mercurial network of inept terrorists holding a nation hostage.

Everywhere we go—for instance, this morning to Don-Don and St. Rafael, two villages deep in the countryside—we become the catalyst for the first mass demonstrations in three years, orgiastic eruptions: love-in, song-fest, road band, dance competition, shouting-match festivals of finger-pointing, upheaval and *blanc* veneration. It's the same throughout Haiti as the Special Forces eddy into the provinces. Back in the States at the networks and metropolitan dailies, the foreign desks are already jaded by the story: *Okay, peasant revelry. Got it, ran it. What else is going on?*

So far the Haitian citizenry has been playing a high-risk sport, each *manifestation* flirting with the edge, careening out over the lip of the abyss and then jitterbugging away at the last moment, high on the thrill. We, too, are exhilarated by the daily arc toward violence, the centrifugal sense of escape; yet it is a burn-out game, however real, and catastrophe never seems genuinely aborted or foiled but deterred, rescheduled to the luckless future. Friday, perhaps? September 30 will mark the third anniversary of the coup d'état. Aristide's supporters are planning nationwide demonstrations, widely expected to test Lavalas's commitment to nonviolence and reconciliation. Can they really behave themselves? Inquiring minds want to know.

A Reuters team tags along with us throughout the morning; the photographer, a grump and action-junkie named Lee Celano, is seriously ill with a respiratory grunge being passed around the press corps. My diagnosis is walk-

g pneumonia. We encourage him to medi-
c out to the USS *Comfort*, a hospital ship
ichored off Cap-Haitien, for treatment, but
elano is pigheaded, married to the shoot,
d will only agree, reluctantly, to be dropped
f at the hotel for some bed rest. Afterward,
e give ourselves the afternoon off as well,
iving down the coast to Combier Beach, a
assic Caribbean hideaway, one of the few re-
rts left in Haiti, the proprietors an industri-
s French couple who keep their towels fresh
r the tourists who never come. Jean-
ernard, the son of the owner and one of
ap-Haitien's leading businessmen, is visiting;
turally, we want to hear his opinion of the
cupation. During the past year,
e says, "Everyone agreed the
mericans destroyed the country.
veryone—the peasants, the elite,
e merchants, Lavalas." But
arter has been a great success, he
ds, and the marines, despite
eir arrogance (and the indiscre-
on of killing ten cops), aren't
aking mistakes.

The Marine Corps, in fact, is go-
g home, we discover in the
orning, handing over the opera-
on to the 10th Mountain Divi-
on, the Army's urban-warfare spe-
alists, recent graduates of the
niversity of Futility, Somalia
mpus. Out on the pier we bump
to Colonel John McGyre, who
s spent the week trying to locate
e Haitians in charge of Cap-Hai-
n's power and water systems, but
ey are all in Port-au-Prince. Mc-
yre figures he'll have to rebuild
ap-Haitien from the ground up, which is why
has brought with him to Haiti the phone
ok from his hometown, Bryant, Texas, as a
ide for what a city of sixty thousand people
eds in the way of administrative and civil
vices. "I didn't know where else to look," he
ys. There it all was in the phone book, the
aster plan, listed under "City Government":
ater Department, Sanitation, Fire Depart-
ent, Sheriff, Education, City and County Po-
e. But once the colonel landed in Cap, he
oked around and said to himself, *Boy, this is*
the way it works back in Bryant, Texas. Don't
pect too much too fast.

On the long miserable drive south to the cap-
l, we again pass through Gonaïves, where all
0 CARE canteens have been ransacked by
ngry mobs. Talking with the Special Forces
FADH headquarters, we learn that in Port-
-Prince Cedras confederates chucked two
enades into the midst of a demonstration cel-

ebrating the reinstallment of the city's mayor, Evans Paul, a charismatic hero who had gone underground, rather than into exile, after the 1991 coup. Six people are dead and forty-three have been wounded by shrapnel. U.S. troops chased the attackers into a warehouse, machine guns blazing, then stood by as an enraged mob ransacked the building. We drive on.

Until the morning of September 30, the nature and intent of the American crusade is something of a riddle, its posture nothing if not oblique. Haiti's unique pathology seems to have stumped, or at least divided, the policy gurus and



strategists back in Washington, and in Port-au-Prince the popular belief in rescue-by-superpower is severely dampened by the U.S. military's ambivalence about its mission. More than twenty thousand servicemen are now in situ, almost exclusively in Cap-Haitien and Port-au-Prince, occupying not the cities themselves but their entrances—harbors, waterfronts, airports—and shuttling convoys back and forth between the encampments. With increasing frequency but little effect (except for the incident in Cap-Haitien), foot patrols and then motorized platoons begin to probe the city in a "show of force," but the statements are too localized and transient, and the bigger show remains meek and half-hearted, seemingly without a macrocosmic purpose. Which is to say, the signs of improvement in Port-au-Prince are too subtle to recognize, and the situation is basically unchanged.

Descending Avenue John Brown from Pétionville into the city, however, Susan and I

are quickly required to think otherwise. Port-au-Prince is definitely occupied, ripe with tension, and the objective of the U.S. military is now conclusive—to protect the rich people up on the mountainside from the wrath of the hundreds of thousands of poor people in the slums below, whom the troops have ostensibly come to liberate. Driving off the slope separating Pétionville from the commercial center of the city, we come to a halt at the first intersection, our way blocked by three Sheridan tanks nested in concertina wire, fortifying a checkpoint barricade. Tanks on urban street corners have a mammoth and sinister presence, in this instance lovingly articulated by the inscriptions I see painted on cannon barrels: BAD KARMA; HOUSE OF PAIN. Nonsense ends right here.

A dozen blocks farther down the avenue, we are waved past another tank position, and after that nothing—no checkpoints, no troops. In the inflamed heart of the city, no security beyond that which the U.S. Command has de-



luded itself into believing the Haitian police force will provide. "Deluded," however, is perhaps an incorrect characterization. From the looks of it, the American military, ever resistant to finding itself caught in the middle of Haitian-on-Haitian violence, has decided that today in Port-au-Prince all hell will break loose, the masses are bound to rampage, and to attempt to prevent the tempest is imprudent but to contain it divine; and so they have cordoned off the city, dividing it between the haves and the have-nots, and are waiting, as though Port-au-Prince were . . . well, I suppose the model is Los Angeles. Anarchy has its limits. Let it blow, but preserve the ruling class or kiss civilization and service good-bye.

Susan and I aren't the only ones out early this morning; along the waterfront and its row of warehouses, a crowd of several hundred lo ers are ripping apart a Cash & Carry store. V stay for a few minutes and then double ba downtown to the Basilica of Notre Dame, t national cathedral, where, after a requiem m in remembrance of the four thousand peo murdered throughout Haiti during three ye of military rule, the pro-Aristide demonstrati is about to begin its march across town to t city cemetery to release a cage of white dov symbols of peace and reconciliation.

"*Veye yo*"—Be on guard—the crowd on t steps of the cathedral advise one another. the aftermath of the *dechoukaj* in 1986, tachés developed an especially wicked habit assassinating Aristide supporters during, or i mediately following, church services. Lava marshals frisk us as we pass through the doo A herd of cameramen prowl the aisles. Inste of incense, I smell whiffs of sewage drifting from the street. Undercover security agents loan from various embassies are posted strategic points throughout the cathedral, wh pering into their shirt collars. Worshipers h up xeroxed images of Aristide and don han made Lavalas headbands. "If you don't wa dictatorship," the priest calls out, "what do y want?" "Democracy!" the people roar. "Give the power that's not yours," the priest cr back, words meant for the Haitian military.

A young man distributes handouts argui for a truth commission. A tiny peasant woma wearing a simple housedress and a camoufla head scarf, threads her way down the aisle, c rying a placard heartbreakingly made with piece of cardboard box and packing-cra sticks. Pasted to the placard are pictures Aristide and of her two sons, showing the neral of one and the other lying in a terri pool of blood. One was killed for wearing a p ture of Aristide; the other, for sticking pr Aristide posters on a wall. Somebody in one the back pews lets loose with a long, pierci cock's crow, and everybody cheers: one of t symbols for Lavalas is a rooster. I step outsi for a smoke. Choppers circle overhead. Ri Bragg, a *New York Times* reporter, tells me has recognized some attachés milling arou out front, dressed as Lavalas supporters. Wh the people are doing inside the church wou have gotten them killed two weeks ago.

After communion and a final benedictio people exit the cathedral to begin the marc five thousand or so strong, only a fraction what organizers hoped for, yesterday's grena attack having kept everyone home. The *Mia Herald* team has split up along the route; drive away with Yves Colon, planning to jun ahead of the marchers somewhere along t Rue de L'Enterrement—Burial Street. Turni

Photograph by Christopher Morris / Time / Black S

ack uptown toward the National Palace, we ark in front of the penitentiary, one block ver on a street parallel to the parade route. A luster of uniformed policemen hang around ıe prison entrance, advertising their worth-essness. These are Lieutenant Colonel Michel rancois's men. Francois is the ruthless police hief of Port-au-Prince, directly responsible for ıuch of the state-sponsored violence in the apital, and the tacit master of the attachés. Only now, as we walk up to the corner and ıake a left on Rue de Champ du Mars, does ves fully realize where we are. "Oh," he says, owning, "this is a FRAPH street." I probably ould have figured it out myself from the over-owering hostility of the men loitering in front f the shops. FRAPH's office and hangout—ıe Normandie Bar—are one block up, just ast the intersection we are walking toward, here it seems the march has stalled.

We slip into the crowd of demonstrators acking the intersection, which is about to be-ome, in a few minutes, no-man's-land. Several undred marchers have already passed beyond ıe Champ du Mars, but not before a FRAPH ıug has grabbed the cage of doves and wrung ıe birds' necks. The vast majority of demon-rators are stopped on the other side of the in-ersection, strung out along the Rue de L'En-errement, waiting patiently to advance, not et cognizant of what is happening up ahead. uddenly the sky above the intersection grows ark with a hailstorm of rocks pitched by razen demonstrators toward their adversaries. When the rocks fall, many land on tin roofs, anging like gunshots. Then, in the enfilade of oise, there is the more distinct crack of a real un being fired. Yves and I flinch, seeing the ullet skid along the pavement, kicking up parks. I look up the Champ du Mars toward RAPH headquarters and see men with pistols alking toward the intersection, toward us, ocks jumping off the street like popping corn.

The demonstrators begin to edge back, pick-ıg up rocks strewn throughout the battle zone. ike everyone else, Yves and I edge along with ıem until, a few yards ahead, at the nucleus of ıe crowd, another blast of gunfire sends us run-ing, panic-blown, back down the street. On ıe opposite side of the street, the police watch ıe scene from the top of the prison wall, wav-ıg at us, shrugging. The next thing I know the owd has retreated so far that Yves and I find urselves in its front ranks. Shots explode so ose I am swept into an alley by a crush of peo-le around me, fifty or sixty of us falling like ominoes into a narrow darkness between ouses. When I pry myself free I am outraged to nd a thief attached to me, his hand trapped in ıy pants pocket. I grab his wrist and snatch my money out of his hand, cursing him as the most shameless man in the world.

Turning away from the pickpocket, I am horrified to see a man being beaten to death right in front of me. I watch the spray of blood from his head as sticks smash his skull, the dervish whirl of the mob, the way the man falters and falls and leaps to his feet and runs a few steps and dies. Then, like a gust of wind, the mob is pummeling another man, blood streaming down his face, then pummeling an NBC cameraman trying to protect him as a CNN cameraman presses so close to the action that blood splashes across the lens of his camera, across television screens around the world. Someone tells me the first man beaten to death was an attaché who charged the crowd, firing his pistol, but then his bullets ran out and the crowd closed back in on him.

ANOTHER BLAST OF GUNFIRE SENDS US RUNNING, PANIC-BLOWN, DOWN THE STREET. THE POLICE WATCH AND WAVE

Now shooting breaks out all over my area of the block. Two people near me are wounded—one in the leg, the other a young boy whose arm seems to have been hit by birdshot. Suddenly Susan is by my side; she has come recklessly across the intersection from the other side, but just as she tells me this we lose each other as the FRAPH gunmen launch another assault up the street, firing away. I see her fly into an alley as I run and dive through the back window of another journalist's car just as it is peeling out. Down at the next intersection, I get out and am able to see that the attachés now have control of the block, they are trashing the march organizers' flatbed truck, chopping its loudspeakers with clubs and machetes, shooting out its tires. One FRAPH guy wields, of all things, a barbecue fork. "Where are the American soldiers?" everybody cries. The crowd bravely, foolishly, charges again, then the street erupts in cheers because behind us an American patrol has arrived. They stop one intersection down and scrutinize the bloody scene, but in fact they've made a wrong turn, this is *not* where they want to be, and they drive off, leaving the demonstrators to choke on their bitterness. "The Americans and FRAPH are twins," people begin to shout up and down the street. For twenty minutes, the attachés dare not shoot for fear the troops are still in the vicinity.

During the lull, I make my way back to the Lavalas truck, but then the gunfire starts up again: a man up at the corner, in a crouch, is firing his rifle at us. I have no choice but to dash with dozens of others into an alley. Shutters bang closed as I sprint back to where the

alley opens into a warren of shanties. I stop there, afraid to go farther. I inch back toward the alley's entrance, which my fellow refugees have blocked off with a rusty sheet of tin. "Don't go back out, it's too dangerous," a teenage boy begs me, but I feel trapped and claustrophobic. Straight out the street is deserted, but when I peer around the wall, I see Peter Slevin hurrying past. I remove the tin and hurdle behind a porch wall, Peter sliding in beside me. He has just run from another alley, where two students sheltered him (both now dead in the dirt, Peter will later learn, executed at point-blank range).

Another flurry of shots nearby, cameramen hustling to their vehicles to strap on flak jackets, and then a kid, weeping, shrieking through his tears, "They shot an American journalist! They shot him in the head!" flees down the street like a jackrabbit. The news is too much for the demonstrators. There is a final clash; a ball of blue smoke floats to the street from atop the walls of the penitentiary, where police have fired a final volley, and then comes a lasting stillness, the crowd's courage broken and its heart defeated. The Red Cross ambulances arrive to haul off the casualties: eight dead, twenty wounded. Lee Celano, the ill photographer who was with us up in Cap, will be going out to the USS *Comfort* after all, with a FRAPH bullet wound to his head.

THE AMERICAN CAPTAIN, AGE THIRTY, IS THE SOLE AUTHORITY OVER THE LIVES OF THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE

Back where we've parked the car, Yves says, "Let's go talk to the guys in the penitentiary." "Not me," I say. "They just tried to kill us." I sit alone for a minute, dull with hatred and fear, but then I feel compelled to join him at the prison's steel doors, to look into the eyes of wickedness as it utters lies.

"What demonstration?" the police answer us. "What rocks? What shots? We're just the jailkeepers here."

At the afternoon's military press briefing, a roomful of smelly, frazzled journalists holler at the spokesmen, Stanley Schrager from the embassy and Colonel Barry Willey. "Our mission is not to serve as the police force," Willey keeps repeating; security for the march is the responsibility of the Haitian police force. "Who is in control of the Haitian police?" a reporter demands. Schrager shrugs and tells the truth. "Nobody," he says. An NBC cameraman loses his cool and has to be ushered outside by his colleagues. Transformed into words and images, the bloodshed is already the air, being delivered stateside to the di ner table of public opinion. Tomorrow, course, the military's policy toward arm gunmen will change, redefined by the impe atives of circumstance rather than princip By Sunday the five-star hotels will begin empty out as the networks reassign people the O. J. Simpson trial, which has bump Haiti as the lead story.

III. *DE OPPRESSO LIBER*

OCTOBER 1–15, 1994

Port-au-Prince and the Haitian governme are in suspended animation, their vital sig barely perceptible; no one is making much an effort to fill the vacuum, especially t Americans. In the outlying towns and vi lages, however, democracy is being serv piecemeal wherever the Special Forces—t Peace Corps with guns, some call them—ha deployed. So I've decided to drive to the c of Limbé, eighteen miles south of Cap-Ha tien, where I've gotten to know a fourtee man Special Forces detachment, led by Ca tain Edmond Barton. There the FADH r away, Barton's detachment moved right i and now I hope to move in with them watch them grapple with the tricky process nation building, which will keep them in Li bé at least until next March.

However much spin the White House a Pentagon put on it, however much they decla it is so, the U.S. military operation in Haiti no more multinational than the Republic Party is multicultural, so I think it curious, t day I return to Limbé, that I'm not the on outsider requesting Captain Barton's permi sion to move into the caserne with the Speci Forces. I arrive at the same time as a Fren colonel, who is sweating under the weight his rucksack. "Where'd you come from?" I as "I'm not here," he says affably. "I don't exist."

"You're imaginary?"

"Yes. I'm sure of it."

Okay. Understood. I can appreciate his log since, according to the *Army Times*, the Sp cial Forces aren't here either.

"Well no, it is not exactly like that," the ima inary colonel elaborates. "I am here in Haiti, b I am not *here*. I am actually in Port-au-Prince."

In Port-au-Prince, the colonel's official s twiddled its thumbs at the Joint Special Oper tions Task Force Command. The ranking of cer of a commando team sent to Haiti to pr tect his government's consulate and evacua French citizens during the American invasio the colonel quickly found himself afflicted wi inactivity, and, after two weeks contemplati

e unwarranted swagger of the American high ɔmmand and the clement challenge of their inimalist campaign, he made up his mind to sappear north into the blue mountains and ɔok up with the Green Berets, the only sol-ers really doing anything on the island. Spe-al Forces Lieutenant Colonel David Schroer, ɔo is now chewing out Captain Barton, has ken a chopper out to inspect his detachments attered throughout the countryside; the ench colonel hitched a ride.

Judging from everyone's hardened de-eanor, the lieutenant colonel's inspection ur is unannounced and unwelcome. Gone ɔm the team members is any fraternal bon-ɔmie, the effortless but surefooted profes-ɔnalism, the cavalier disregard for the perils schmoozing with journalists. Today, they e dour, stone-faced, regulation-issue grunts. rst, the lieutenant colonel dumps on the COs for having jungle sleeves—their shirt ffs rolled up above their wrists—an exceed-gly petty dress-code violation in a zone of nflict, especially in the tropics, but for older ficers this obsession with uniforms is a lega-of Vietnam, the first sign of a breakdown in scipline. Second, the lieutenant colonel es Captain Barton's ass in a skillet. What is e captain doing? the lieutenant colonel ants to know. Starting a nap clinic? Why n't he running joint patrols out to the other wns in his district? Why hasn't he told the ople here to clean up their marketplace? It a goddamned eyesore. Why hasn't he set an ample by policing his own compound? It is garbage pit. The detachments in Gonaïves id Grande Rivière du Nord are operating lls-out while here in Limbé everybody is ydreaming. If the captain can't do his job, e lieutenant colonel warns, he'll get some-ɔdy else out here who will.

Haiti is thirty-year-old Barton's first com-and in the field, and he is, despite the cal-us set of his jaw, stupefied by the lieu-nant colonel's excoriations, which are ndamentally uninformed, unrealistic, and ɲjust. There are solid reasons for the cap-in's dilatory pace, more than even Barton mself is aware of. He doesn't know, for in-ance, that, unlike the Special Forces in Go-ïves and Grande Rivière, he is starting ɔm scratch, in control of the only district eadquarters outside of Cap where the ADH have abandoned their post. Nor does arton know that for a week the other units ve been patrolling their outlying areas in umvees, whereas Barton's pair of Humvees ve been airlifted into Limbé only yester-y. Today, he loads them up with men and nds them out on recon, and if you give him the heavy equipment necessary to scrape up the years of accumulated filth in the market-place, fine, but it isn't going to get done without a front loader and a dump truck, and as for the mess in the caserne, guilty as charged, but he needs authorization to hire laborers. Lieutenant colonels, however, fly around in helicopters to approve results, not listen to captains whine about their prob-lems, so this lieutenant colonel gets back in his Chinook and leaves.

At ease, Captain Barton glares into space, spits, cusses. He deserves a measure of sympa-thy. He grew up mostly in Kentucky, graduat-ed from Officers Candidate School, and went to Fort Bragg, but no matter how much mon-ey taxpayers spend, you can't prepare an American soldier for a mission like Haiti, or a



Kentucky boy for a place like Limbé. He is, much to his distaste, the contemporary ver-sion of a Roman procurator, the sole authori-ty over the lives of three hundred thousand people living under primitive conditions in a mountainous, isolated four-hundred-square-kilometer administrative district. This isn't Pandora's box, it is her warehouse, chock-full of the urgent banalities and minutiae of civic dispute. The incessant arguments started the first morning, when two different guys showed up to claim ownership of a bicycle left behind in the caserne, and it hasn't stopped since, a twenty-four-hour-a-day yam-mer. Anybody with a grudge against his neighbor denounces him as a Macoute. The Special Forces have lost count of how many times the rules of engagement have changed in the past five days. And no matter what the Army claims about the linguistic versatility of its Special Forces, the Limbé detachment's collective knowledge of French won't get

otograph by Alon Reininger/Contact Press

them fed in a Parisian bistro. There are moments when you *know* getting shot at is better than this—Hercules, shoveling a century's worth of corruption out of the stalls.

How perverse symmetry is, to be the source of both beauty and irony. The caserne I have moved into was built by the marines during the 1915 occupation, one of the outposts from which they cruelly stamped out the Caco Rebellion, a revolt by forced-labor road builders against U.S. forces, restored power to the elite mulatto families in Port-au-Prince, and trained a national army that eventually became the FADH and brutalized the population for seven decades, until the marines returned. The architecture is simple—a long shed-like structure facing the marketplace; thick concrete walls, the front higher than the back so that its tin roof slopes downward toward the rear of the compound, its outbuildings, mess hall, and rubble-strewn, chicken-pecked open ground circumscribed by high walls. You enter the caserne at its middle, and ten good steps will take you through to its back exit. A jail cell and, behind that, an arsenal occupy its right half. To the left of the entrance is a bullpen, where the communications specialist, Sergeant Jim Pledger, has set up his radios and satellite phone; behind the bullpen is a small office, and farther left, in the remaining third of the building, is a small barracks crammed with four double-decker metal bunks, rucksacks, and MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) cartons. It is here, on the bare wire webbing of one of the upper bunks, that I stow my gear.



Outside, there is a huge cieba tree, and in its shade a row of wooden chairs, where Barton and the imaginary colonel are receiving v
tors, delegations, complainants, claimants,
seekers, AWOLs, dignitaries, scam artists,
madmen. Right now, they seem to be hold
an encounter session with ten or so member
Haiti's Generation X. These guys, I am t
are the Committee of the Young, a lo
Lavalas student group. "They're trying to as
some level of authority," says Sergeant Bill
atke, "but they've never had a job, they
been students all their lives. They're too g
to hold a job because they're educat
and they're basically a pain in
ass."

When the sun goes down, the Spec
Forces crank the diesel generator, the o
electricity in town, except for the Baptist h
pital. In the mess hall I eat my first MRE
chicken à la king, peanut butter and crack
beverage base powder, a bar of Charms c
dies. I run into Sergeant Bill Collins,
team's medic. "We're not here for just a c
metic screw-up. We're here," Collins says w
ly, "for the long-term screw-up, the whole s
tem—we're going to get it all." Collins is
youngest member, twenty-five, of the deta
ment; Sergeant Ernie Brown is the oldes
thirty-seven. Ernie is black (with Cherol
blood), big, and, by his own admission, be
tiful. Tomorrow he's in charge of the first
supply mission to Cap to bring back sheets
tin, wood, and nails to begin replacing
collateral damage caused by the downw
from the helicopters. Not only did the ch
pers knock down all the walls at the soc
field; houses all over town have had th
roofs blown off.

Ernie makes a list of material; someone
minds him to add chicken wire to stret
over the open casement windows in the b
racks. "Grenades," Ernie explains for my b
efit. The soldiers could close the shutte
but it's too hot. Later, when I climb up
my bunk, which is only a few inches bel
one of the open windows, I'm just too ti
to fret about grenades and take my cue fr
the fatalistic snores of my barrack-mates.
somebody really wants to do it," they t
me, "it'd be the easiest thing in the world
take us out. If you're unconventional forc
it comes with the turf." I'm most worried
the thing that most worries them—gett
hit by sniper fire when we go out at night
to the pitch-black compound to use the s
trench latrine. Which is what happens t
same night to a Special Forces soldier at
caserne in Les Cayes, on the southern co
Shot in the back while taking a dun
Throughout the night the radios fizz; m

Photograph by Alon Reininger/Contact P

ming off watch duty quietly rouse their re-
acements. The night achieves a measure of serenity impossible to imagine in daylight.

The next morning I find Captain Barton
d the imaginary colonel out back under the
wwow tree, their heads together, building a
ıtual wavelength for their already remarkable
llaboration. Since the Army hasn't seen fit
provide Barton with an interpreter, the
aginary colonel, whose English is flawless, is
aven-sent. But the imaginary colonel, as
ınslators go, isn't particularly conscientious;
ɔt only does he seem especially receptive to
aitian circumlocution but he loves to talk
mself, and often forgets that the captain is
ting there, in Barton's own words, "like a pig
ıring at a wristwatch," without a clue.

Even if he had ten times the men, and a fleet
Humvees, Barton's laundry list would still be
liculously formidable:

1. Clean up the marketplace (to placate the
utenant colonel; forget it).
2. Cooperate with the FADH (only there is
FADH in Limbé).
3. Rebuild a local security force (out of the
neral population, if he has to, says the lieu-
nant colonel; only Barton can't pay them and
can't arm them unless they're already offi-
ılly armed, so he'll have to find trustworthy
ople he can persuade to risk their lives dur-
g this tumultuous transitional period simply
love of country alone, which, naturally, not
ny are eager to do).
4. Recon all the other towns, villages, ham-
s, and outposts in the 53rd District, assess
ch one's security needs, and make contact
th all the *chefs du section* (the infamous rural
eriffs, who have a reputation for ruling their
ɔlated sections like medieval fiefdoms).
5. Whatever it takes, no matter the cost or
ıom he has to kill to do it, first, last, and
remost, get all of his men home alive.

And so the improvisation of Haiti, and the
icro-liberation of its 53rd District, begins. In
e military argot of the day, Barton and his
en separate the population into two classes:
e "goodies" and the "baddies." However
urky the line between the two, certain as-
mptions and guidelines apply. For better or
ɔrse, and with the exception of bloodthirsty
ınks urging the crowds to violence, Lavalas
ıd its members are goodies. Until proven oth-
wise, all elected and/or appointed officials are
odies. Because of the shootings at police head-
ıarters in Cap, all Haitian cops are baddies
ıough in the northern districts this is a moot
tegory, since all the police are in hiding). At
ast in the 53rd District, all FADH deserters who persist in their desertion will be presumed baddies, but any FADH soldiers who remain in their casernes, or any who are willing to show Barton an I.D. card and come back in, will be presumed goodies. So-called attachés and so-called Macoutes may or may not be baddies, depending on the evidence, who's denouncing them, and why. The *chefs du section* they're not sure about. Barton and the Special Forces also are perplexed about FRAPH, a confusion exacerbated by the commanding officer of the Special Forces, Colonel Mark Boyatt, who's been preaching to his troops that democracies can't function without a loyal opposition, and in Haiti, says Boyatt, FRAPH should be regarded as the loyal opposition.

> EVEN WITH TEN TIMES THE MEN AND EQUIPMENT, THE CAPTAIN COULD NOT ACCOMPLISH ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

This reading isn't a very precise, subtle, comprehensive, or even knowledgeable analysis of the forces at play in Haitian society, but it dares to clarify a mission that, from a soldier's perspective on the ground, is precariously vague. It also allows the captain and the imaginary colonel to formulate, optimistically, a plan for the construction of a Haitian security force that, if properly conceived, will render the American military presence superfluous, so that everybody can go home. The gist of the plan is best expressed by a single French word: *ensemble*. A mix of the old and the new. Eight each—a balance of FADH goodies and Lavalas goodies. Barton and the colonel will select the FADH (if they ever return); meanwhile, they will prompt the notables in Limbé and Plaisance and wherever else there is a FADH caserne in the district to convene town meetings, select candidates for a transitional police force, present them to the population, and let the people vote on their acceptability. Voilà! How do you like your democracy? Raw.

No sooner have the captain and the imaginary colonel finished explaining the scheme to me than they are given the opportunity to float it before some potential participants, people whose fate rests on the success of this improvised version of reconciliation. We rise to shake the hands of the delegation from Plaisance: the huge, bald-headed, light-skinned mayor, a quintessential politician with a molasses smile, caressing us with flowery French phrases; the short, lean, dark-skinned FADH commander of the Plaisance caserne, a quintessential martinet, sizing us up behind his horn-rimmed glasses, ingratiating himself to the invaders. With him are two junior officers; all three are dressed as civilians. Everyone sits down, and the imaginary colonel outlines the proposal. The FADH officer—a lieu-

tenant — bounces in his chair, waiting for his chance to respond. "If you mix new Lavalas police with remnants of the old security forces," the lieutenant is finally able to say, his body language as animated as his voice is passionate, "we must sleep together, and there is so much hate, the Lavalas people will kill us as we sleep." Instead, the delegation requests daily U.S. patrols in Plaisance; Barton can only sigh and explain that he lacks the resources for anything more than intermittent visits. In the meantime, Barton says, he wants them back in uniform and back in their caserne. Hearing this, one of the junior officers jumps up in disgust. "I don't think it will work your way," says the lieutenant, "but if the situation stays this way, I will return to the caserne. You should understand, however, that Haiti is not a civilized country."

MADAME BRUNO WANTS A TRUCK, WANTS THE MALARIAL CANALS CLEANED AND DREDGED, WANTS ELECTRICITY, WANTS . . .

Now the petitioners are lined up, waiting for an audience with the captain and the imaginary colonel under the powwow tree, which I've discovered has a duck residing in the base of its hollow trunk. Next in line are the leader of the Youth Committee and a small, gentlemannered man who says he was the Aristide-appointed *delegat* to Limbé, come out of hiding after all these years, and he is eager to take control of the town's affairs. The aggressive Youth Committee leader makes a similar bid for a piece of the action. The captain snorts. "He wants money," summarizes the imaginary colonel, "and he wants power, and tomorrow he maybe wants to kill people." Barton tells the pair he'll call a town council meeting this afternoon, which they are welcome to attend. Inside the tree, the duck quacks.

The town hall is in an advanced state of disrepair, its ceiling and wood floor rotted through in patches from water damage, yet there has been an attempt to salvage its dignity with gray and yellow paint, the visages of former mayors hung on the walls, and its chairs and benches are sturdy, arranged in a semicircle around a simple wooden table where Barton and the colonel take the seats offered them. The mayoress, Madame Bruno, has the shape and disposition of a cannonball. The justice of the peace is a tall, frail old man with a missing leg. The headmistress of one of the local schools for forty years, Madame Bazin is a paragon of bourgeois femininity, though her bun wig is a bit lopsided and her purse is noticeably empty. Unlike Madame Bruno, Madame Bazin easily succumbs to the flattery of the imaginary colonel, the smoky sensuality of his voice.

Almost everybody else in the room is fro Lavalas, crammed onto the benches, squeez solemnly against the walls, and their presen throws Madame Bruno into a snit. She grow at the *delegat* when he attempts to hug her, sl won't deign to even look at him, she won't s until finally the imaginary colonel seduces h with her own importance, and then she si but the chair won't contain her ample botto and must be exchanged for another, wider or "There's a security problem that we want yo the notables and elected officials of Limbé, solve," the imaginary colonel begins. The ca tain sits impassively, his M-16 propped agai his chair, and lets him talk, and it is spellbin ing, the colonel's speech, his manner, delica ly but systematically milking the venom fr the fangs of the serpent. Drop by drop, drains the room of acrimony until these bit adversaries—the past and the future, face face for the first time in three years—are ea mollified, and then, by paying tribute to t formal hierarchy—justice, mayor, *delegat*— begins to gather a consensus out of the din vigorous argument. Finally, everyone agrees work together to build a new police force; morrow, they'll hash out the selection proc among themselves, then meet with the capt and colonel again on Wednesday.

"Now," says Madame Bruno, peeri through the oversized frame of her desig eyeglasses, "we have *beaucoup* problems here Limbé." She wants a truck to haul town tr to the dump, she wants the canals dredged a cleaned because they're malarial, she wa electricity, she wants . . . Barton stops her, t her to make a list, and emphasizes the imp tance of identifying problems that affect o the community, not individuals.

"Please, Captain," Madame Bazin says, pu ing her withered lips, "no more helicopt over the marketplace."

After the meeting, Barton feels the urge stroll around town, which he hasn't seen mu of, having been "too busy wracking my br back in the compound." Although he's w ried about putting untrained people on streets as cops, he's upbeat, relieved that th were no demonstrations at the town hall. picks up a crusty old penny lying in the road and gives it to one of the little boys in entourage, who laughs at its worthlessness. spite the tropical backdrop, the desolatio the neighborhood we walk through remi me of Aristide's bleakly realistic goal: "We move from misery to poverty with digni Newly inspired by the American interventi the citizens of Limbé have begun to sweep streets with frond brooms. Farther down road, there's a group of women on the stoo

ir house, eating sugar cane, and the captain
s if he can try a piece, earning an unexpect-
cheer of approval from the crowd of on-
kers. "The American soldier eats with us!"
ple cry to one another, amazed, because
Haitian military, afraid of being poisoned,
would never eat anything the popu-
lation offered them.

The next day, although they're mightily
cerned about being ambushed along the way,
captain and the imaginary colonel are taking
Hearts and Minds Show on the road. I climb
the open bed of the Humvee with the two
hem; two team members, a driver and a secu-
backup, ride in front. I've traveled the
gth of Route 100 three times, but the officers
e never been out on it before, and they make
nervous, shifting seats according to the con-
r of the terrain, scanning the ridgetops and
dside for snipers. At the village of Camp
q, halfway between Limbé and Plaisance, a
e *manifestation* has closed the highway, the
ed crowd bouncing to the feverish rhythm of
nemade trumpets and drums, chanting a "Ce-
s Go Eat Shit" song. We pull off to inspect
tiny caserne they've thoroughly trashed,
l, quite by coincidence, two more Hum-
s—the first American military traffic to take
road north from Gonaïves—arrive from the
osite direction, carrying Barton's superior,
lieutenant colonel, who jumps out to a flurry
alutes. A Lavalas marshal blows a whistle to
e the crowd settle down so that the Ameri-
soldiers can talk. The lieutenant colonel
s how the cleanup's going. Hold a big mass
eting in the marketplace, he advises Barton,
d tell the people we're not here to give you
l. We're not here to give you money, we're
e to help you reestablish your government,
if you're going to go crazy, we're not going to
o." Set up a court and jail for criminals, but
d the politically motivated troublemakers to
t-au-Prince. "You can pick out the bad guys
the street]," the lieutenant colonel says.
ey wear fresh clean clothes, Ray-Bans, and a
of gold jewelry. . . . Everyone's anxious to get
ball rolling and get these places stabilized in
next six or seven days because [Aristide's re-
n] will be a very destabilizing thing." Behind
officers, the demonstrators quietly hold up a
kboard chalked with demands and pleas. A
-looking man asks me to help him chase
y an attaché named Innocent, who has kept
n out of his own house for two weeks. The
wd adulates the soldiers; as we leave, the
ginary colonel waves and blows kisses. Bar-
looks glum; I suspect the lieutenant
nel's gotten to him again, but that's not it.
e're a sign of hope," he says, "but it's a lot of
false hope, for what these people really think Aristide and we can do."

The town hall of Plaisance is insufferably hot, pungent with the smell of unwashed bodies and overstuffed with humanity, the road outside pooled with spectators. As in Limbé, the imaginary colonel's oratory soothes the many-voiced beast; the contending factions come to terms on the process of composing a new police force: the first selection will be made by the population, the second selection by Captain Barton, the third by the United Nations. As in Limbé, with the dispatch of the business at hand, the dynamic of the meeting regresses to its more natural state—passionate shouting, wild gesticulation, denouncements and overwrought appeals. Like flash fire, the bloom of hatred consumes the room's oxygen; I'm gasping, soaked through. You don't have to be a clairvoyant to see the aura of death haloing some of the speakers, to know there are people here who won't survive the days until Aristide's second coming, and I shudder at the bravery of the young man who steps forward to hand Captain Barton a list of armed attachés and FRAPH hoodlums he alleges are continuing a reign of terror in Plaisance.

THE CROWD ADULATES THE SOLDIERS. "WE'RE A SIGN OF HOPE," THE AMERICAN CAPTAIN ADMITS, "BUT IT'S A LOT OF FALSE HOPE"

During lunch, one of the Special Forces members makes a postcard by cutting a square out of his MRE box, then addresses it to President Clinton at the White House: *Dear Bill—Having fun in Haiti. Wish you were here. Just looking forward to Nov. Elections. Love, Middle-aged Republican.* It's no exaggeration that many of the troops don't like Clinton; but their disapprobation pivots on a single issue—gays in the military. In the detachment, they bitch about missing deer season in North Carolina, missing being with their families for the holidays; they bitch about the ineptitudes of Command. But the truth is, they're not dissatisfied to be ordered, by any president, into a theater of operation, doesn't matter where, and, without being indecorous, they're proud to be doing what they've been trained to do. They know why they're in Haiti, even if the folks back home don't. Without guile or quixotic naïveté, and with a growing, if not yet full, appreciation for the political and moral ambiguities of the mission, they say it: "We're here to free the oppressed." *De Oppresso Liber* is the motto of the Special Forces. And in Haiti, a place not unlike, say, the state of Mississippi in 1866, that motto applies. But is Haiti worth one American soldier's life? The soldiers don't ask the question.

This afternoon, we're off the pavement, headed deep into the countryside on a torturous, kidney-jarring dirt road to "liberate" a string of mountain towns—De Gobert, Margot, Pilate—places abandoned by Port-au-Prince, invisible to the world, and long lost to another century, another continent. Despite its isolation, the Haitian outback is densely populated; throughout our slow hour-and-a-half drive to Pilate, the road is continuously lined with peasants running from their huts and gardens to cheer and applaud us, dancing spontaneous jigs, dashing after the Humvee to shake our hands, waving their straw hats in the air, mile after mile, chanting, "*Blanc! blanc! blanc! blanc! Oui! Oui! Oui! Merci! Merci!*" "Now I can begin to imagine the joy of the soldiers entering Normandy," says the imaginary colonel.

Arriving in Pilate, something happens that astounds us, something we will never forget. As we come over a hill that drops us, unexpectedly, into the center of town, we come face to face with a funeral procession. The street is filled with mourners, women shrieking with grief, sad old men shuffling behind the pine box coffin carried on the heads of two pallbearers. We stop, they stop. For a split second, the world stops, its wires crossed, a reality blackout, the mourners zapped with a thousand miraculous volts of revelation. Then it's as though someone flips a circuit breaker. The funeralgoers shake their heads clear of disbelief and reinvent themselves in one great big convulsive boom of elation, whirling one another around like children on a playground, the old women hopping in the air with their arms fluttering above their heads, frisky old men skipping in the dirt, and the pallbearers, their black faces sequined with light, dance onward to the cemetery, the coffin dipping and rolling above their heads like a rowboat on the open sea. This is freedom to the unfree, its first sip so intoxicating it transforms funerals into celebrations.

MADAME BRUNO'S LIST NOW CONTAINS A JEEP, TWO NEW SCHOOLS, A KIDS' LIBRARY, AN ABATTOIR, AND SO ON

While American-enforced entropy continues to slowly unravel the regime, decentralization has its own organic counterforce. Daily events in the countryside bunch together in an accumulation of chaotic emotions, shifting power, and soaring anticipation, gaining momentum and weight, threatening to reach critical mass on October 15—the day Aristide is to step off the plane. There's an unconfirmed report of a grenade attack on Special Forces holding a town in the central plateau. Six FADH soldiers have cast their fate with t Special Forces and are now back in unifor living inside the compound. One of the d trict's forty-eight *chefs du section* comes in fr the bush, begging Captain Barton to allow h to keep his job. "When you catch a thief, you beat him up?" the imaginary colonel a him. "No, not too much," the fellow replies. camp toady is running a collateral-dama scam out of the caserne, coaching his pals o side the walls of the compound on how to f false claims with the military. A box of cri wonderful apples arrives with the resupply fr Cap-Haitien. At lunch in the mess hall, we ten to disconnected statements from Washi ton on a shortwave radio belonging to one the soldiers. When the lieutenant colonel n drops by, there are two standoffish spooks his entourage who remain out by the gat ask the lieutenant colonel who they are. "C they work for U.S. AID," he says. I walk out ask the pair themselves, who both wear b jeans and polo shirts. "You guys reporter They glance at each other and snick "Yeah," they say, "we work for *Rolling Stor* "The LC told me you're AID." "Nah, we w for the embassy," they say, but when I about Stanley Schrager, the embassy spok man, they don't know who he Never mind.

The imaginary colonel makes each of new civil inductees sign an oath of serv which the captain has composed and cop on his laptop computer. The air is tangy w sweat and sweetened by beautiful singing t wafts down from the nearby cathed Madame Bruno is more congenial, wearin sailor-cut white dress with blue polka d her community-projects shopping list cont thirty items: a jeep, a truck, two new sch a kids' library, a new abattoir, and so on.

The captain, it seems, is experiencing "r sion itch"; his orders from Command— provide a safe and secure environment"— wide open for interpretation, and that him. "I think what we're doing is a mo the imaginary colonel says to bolster him. true: Limbé's the first place in Haiti to tr form a new security system, and there ar more mass demonstrations in the market boiling crowds. Still, they both fret that so where along the chain of command someo going to undo what they've accomplish Despite appearances, the imaginary colo affection for the Haitian people is genu and it depresses him to entertain the no that he might be colluding in a double c Unfortunately, the officer's concerns seem tified, because the manner in which th

gun to redistribute power on the ground, on e grass-roots level, seems to contradict nerican policy, the big picture. The fact is, shington apparently doesn't want Lavalas ited to the kitchen of state; rather, the polmakers intend to manipulate a stasis, into ich they'll insert Aristide and their own l. There's a Special Forces major, a specialin civil affairs, who has just arrived in Goves and rented an entire fleabag hotel for team for three months. I find myself hope he has brought something to read, beise, except for letting the Army's engineers air the existing electrical and water instructure, there are not going to be any nmunity projects in Haiti—one of the specialties that the Special Forces excel in.

At night, Sergeant Miatke sits on the nt steps of the caserne, holding class with happy attentive town kids. English-creole ons and stories from American history. I put a pair of NODs (Night Observation Des) and watch the lunatics and evangelists o haunt the marketplace after dark; the hnology makes them appear washed in flickng phosphorescence as they flail about the ls. A woman squats to urinate, and the piss nes out from between her legs like a ribbon green fire. "What's the meaning of life?" one the kids on the steps asks me in Spanish. nen I lie on my bunk for my nightly exercise sleep deprivation, a bat lands on my pillow. geant Jim has two radios going all the time; ther of them works right. They make a noise aerosol cans sprayed in bursts.

With every sunrise comes a file of people ggling in from the countryside with tales treachery and disaster. Hourly, it seems, re are casualties, many brought bleeding the caserne. In Port Margot, an attaché has n murdered. In a place called Le Borgne, on the northwest coast, everybody is atking one another. I ride with the captain l the imaginary colonel from town to n; everywhere we go we start a mini-riot, nfiscate a pile of weapons, and spend the t hour calming everyone down. If there's ous trouble, we're on our own, since the d radio in the Humvee doesn't work once put a mountain between us and Limbé. hear reports of attaché militias regroupin the countryside. Sergeant Walt Cline ctices knife fighting in the compound. nat's not something you really want to do, t?" I ask him. "No," he says, "but I don't nt to be caught short." He has a degree in rature; Donald Hall is his favorite poet.

n the middle of the day, at an outdoor nightclub in Plaisance, thirty-one candidates are presented to the population, who will approve eight for the new police force. There's an uproar when the candidates learn that there's no money involved, but the mayor placates them by saying the American captain will give them some food, clothes, shoes. Most of the candidates are students; a few are teachers. One declares he wants to serve his country; he is soundly applauded. Another can't seem to explain himself when somebody identifies him as FRAPH, and in the ensuing clamor he's lucky to get out of the place alive. "This is democracy in progress," says the imaginary colonel.

"EVERYBODY WANTS SOMETHING I CAN'T GIVE," RANTS THE CAPTAIN. "LIKE A SOLDIER STATIONED IN THEIR GODDAMNED HOUSE"

A Special Forces soldier guarding the Humvees takes a grenade off somebody in the crowd. The line we walk seems to get thinner every day. We eat lunch, and children fight over our MRE trash, licking the plastic containers. "Who knows where this thing will go?" Captain Barton muses.

Smoke, lending a dream-like texture to the air, is now a constant in Limbé as the population gets serious about cleaning up the town for Aristide's return. With machetes, they hack down all the trees along the roadside, because Command has told Captain Barton to clear the power lines so that electricity can be restored to the area. The defoliation gets out of hand. Schools have reopened, mothers pedaling their children in the mornings on bicycles. The police chief of Port-au-Prince makes a dash for the Dominican border and is granted asylum. A letter arrives from Port Margot saying that the FADH deserters from Cap-Haitien are organizing in the vicinity, please come to protect us because a lot of weapons are in town. A man demands to see Captain Barton because someone killed his two pigs. Barton's frustration is starting to grind him down. Finally he shouts, "Everybody wants some fucking thing I can't give. Everybody wants a soldier to be stationed in their goddamned house." Finished? No. "This new police force is a joke," he adds, and then retires to his bunk. A voodoo priest comes to the gate; he wants a job as an informant. Madame Bruno has added a teen club and electric outlets for her office to the wish list. "Is midnight basketball on that list?" Sergeant Bob Fox wonders. The town of Bas-Limbé requests an immediate response to its earlier request to be rescued from a plague of attachés.

"We'll go over there and give them the democracy speech, the Aristide speech, the peace and reconciliation speech, buy off a few more days, and come back," says the captain. "The egg is coming back to the chicken," the crowds in Cap sing, mocking the generals who, after their 1991 coup, told the population that Aristide had no more chance of returning to Haiti than an egg has of returning to its source. In Le Borgne, three hours away on a virtually unpassable road, tucked back into the coastal mountains, five Macoutes are murdered. General Cedras and his family board a plane for Panama.

Two days before Aristide is scheduled to return, everybody is freaking out. The mayor of Plaisance requests a Special Forces squad stationed there, but the captain can't spare the men. Fearing an outbreak of violence, Barton has requested, three times, a squad of 10th Mountain Infrantrymen from Cap-Haitien to reinforce the caserne, which is beginning to look like Fort Apache, barbed wire everywhere, loops of concertina wire in the front, sandbagged firing positions on the roof, on both sides of the door, at the gate. Command isn't denying the request, it's ignoring it. In Bas-Limbé, the imaginary colonel empties his pockets to explain to the new civil police that the Americans have nothing to give them. Barton is "sick and tired of being in the fucking police biz, and I'm just about ready to let the Haitian soldiers loose and beat the shit out of everybody like they used to do."

The day before Aristide arrives, the good folks at Cap send the caserne ten body bags, which they figure the Special Forces will find a use for. Bandits are reported to be operating all along Route 100, from Port-au-Prince to Cap. A FRAPH house is torched in Plaisance. Around midafternoon, pandemonium erupts in the marketplace as the Lavalas radicals chase a middle-aged, middle-class woman into the caserne. "Kill her!" people scream. "She's a Macoute, a traitor; she turned in Lavalas members to the FADH." The woman is traumatized and mumbles her innocence over and over like a prayer. Her four children are still at home, trapped by a mob.

A Special Forces team meeting after dinner gets contentious. The NCOs want guidance but there are no orders from Command, only silence. "We can't beat them up," says Sergeant Miatke. "We can't shoot them. We don't have the authority to bring them in and lock them up. Their man's going to be in the palace, so maybe the best thing is to befriend them. But if we rough them up, th they're going to say let's fuck the Ame cans up, but that won't work because w just shoot them. There's no corr answer."

Despite heavy rains, in the early hours October 15, 1994, the first *manifestations* gin. By morning, the island of Haiti has hausted itself. The people have spent their terness in a spree of gratitude and exultati they're too worn out to do anything but st in the gaily decorated carnival sheds they erected along every roadside and listen to radio to finally hear that the nightmar over. Aristide lands at midday, protected b private security force, addresses the cro outside the National Palace, urges calm, throws a dove into the air. His return proce without incident. We were wrong. There i going to be any violence on this day.

The egg has returned to the chicken, but chicken is leashed to the table of American eign policy. Before the sun is down, there moment that couldn't have happened yester tomorrow it will be almost impossible to re- ate. About an hour before twilight, the wo who was accused of being a Macoute asks Special Forces to help her go into hiding, to her to a friend's house far out in the country where she can seek refuge. Sergeant Miatke two of the NCOs agree to take her. I go al and so does one of the FADH; so does a pr cious kid the camp has sort of adopted. weight lifts off the woman's shoulders o we've passed the city limits and are rumb through the fragrant countryside down r we've never been on before jammed with re ers who, when they see us, embrace the air each other, screaming themselves hoarse. not a Macoute," the woman tries to explai us; her husband is a supporter of a former p dential candidate who lost out to Aristide, that's why, she says, all the trouble starte one of the crowds on the road, the FADH dier recognizes a former comrade, a deserter the caserne, and talks him into joining us in Humvee. We're deep in the jungle, deep what many people in the United States w call the heart of darkness, and the light's gol the road for miles so dense with ecstasy tha crawl along, barely moving. Suddenly bravest of the Lavalas horde start clim aboard, five, six, seven, twelve, twenty, tw one, everybody in Haiti is in this Humvee, we roll along through the forest and fields, d ing and singing—a magic, illusory bubble of onciliation. In Haiti, in perhaps too much o world, democracy is what we call the illusi which we are most invested.

SOUVENIR MIRACLES

Going to see the Virgin in western Herzegovina

By Elizabeth Rubin

n a full-moon night
t June, I sat on the
ged rocks of Mount
lbrdo in the highlands
western Herzegovina
iting for the Virgin
ry to appear. I was not
ne. Tens of thousands
pilgrims prayed the
ary in assorted lan-
ages and stared up at
great white aluminum
ss that rose from the
ky clearing like a flag
conquest. They had
mbed through thorn-
hes up the difficult slope from the
age of Medjugorje to celebrate the
teenth anniversary of the Virgin
ry's nightly apparitions.



van Dragićević, one of the six
oatian children who claimed to
e first seen "Gospa" ("the Virgin"
Croatian) at this spot on June 24,
81, and who is now a full-time
fessional visionary, led the crowd
ough the decades of the rosary.
ndles flickered on the calcite
nes piled against the cross and il-
inated the faces of the believers
xpectant, yearning, tear-stained.
affin and incense permeated the
ht air. Every crevice between the
nes was filled with offerings—
niature crucifixes and crosses,
vers, flags from every continent—
l requests. One letter read, "Dear
ry, please bless my sick husband,
n." Another said, "I come to you
my hands and knees, a sinner, an
alcoholic. Please, Mary, wash over me. Help me be clean." Flames licked the letters. A woman in a MARY QUEEN OF PEACE T-shirt doused the fire with her Evian water. A trembling German woman pushed her handicapped daughter closer to the cross. Father Rookey, a healing priest from Chicago, laid his hands on a middle-aged man in a stretcher. A weeping Australian man in a wheelchair murmured, "Please, Mary, come to me. Please, Mary, show us a sign."

Like shadows bending through the blur of colorfully clad suppliants, Croatian women in black, many of whom I had seen walking barefoot—even crawling—from surrounding villages, wept quietly over their rosary beads, mourning the third anniversary of the civil war that had taken their sons and husbands. It was a ceremony of innocence in which all involved—the foreign pilgrims and the local Croats—awaited redemption from the "mother of humankind."

But standing there above Medjugorje, a hub for warfare as much as for pilgrimage, I found the idea of innocence in this rocky "oasis of peace" difficult to reconcile with the bandit mentality and ethnic warfare that plagued these slopes and the valleys below. In May 1993, it was not the aura of the Virgin that lit the night sky but rocket launchers targeting the Muslim section of Mostar, fifteen miles away, from a copse between Medjugorje's main road and the Anna Maria hotel. And last night I had listened to the fight songs of drunken Croatian soldiers at the Anna Maria clashing with the evening mass that boomed from loudspeakers on the twin spires of St. James Church.

To the Croats of western Herzegovina, the relationship between nationalist and religious fervor is not so much an irony as a casus belli. Croats refer to this forbidding swath of the arid Dinaric mountain range as a "viper zone"—a reference to both the abundance of poisonous snakes and the Herzegovinian character. Wedged between the Riviera-style ports on the Adriatic and the verdant mountains of central Bosnia, the briar-snarled rock ranges of Herzegovina—the southernmost tip of Bosnia-Herzegovina—have served for the past five hundred years as a crossroads for successive armies: Turkish, Austro-Hungarian, Serbian, and Communist Yugoslavian. The re-

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ograph by Krpan Jasmin / Gamma-Liaison

gion's most primitive nationalists—including the worst Bosnian-Croat war criminals—hail from this rugged land. Ruined Ottoman fortresses still cling to the slopes, feeding the local memory of historical victimization, which is so acute that one Croatian soldier told me wistfully, "You should have seen what this country was like before the Turks."

To judge by the surrounding countryside, it seemed as if the Croats were trying to restore that pre-Muslim world. A few days before the anniversary of the Virgin's appearance I drove with my landlord, Jozo Ostojić, to the Muslim village of Gradska, five minutes from Medjugorje. We passed charred, ransacked houses and a mosque, whose huge minaret lay toppled in the yard. Inside, amid the rubble, I found a photograph of men in fezzes and black robes carrying a coffin, military draft notices from the 1980s, Arabic schoolbooks, and mildewed children's clothes. The village, "cleansed" of its Muslims in early September 1993, was now occupied by Croatian refugees from central Bosnia. "This area was once all Croatian," Jozo explained, gesturing to a medieval Croatian castle high on a hill overlooking the parched sage, poppies, and Irish broom in the valley. "And now it will be again. Gospa wanted it that way."

I had come to Medjugorje to see how the legend of Gospa and the pilgrim parade fit into the politics of the war. From the beginning, the religious "happenings" in Medjugorje have been politicized. When the six children announced in June of 1981 that the Virgin Mary, bathed in light and floating on a cloud, had given them a message of peace and wanted the people to convert back to the ways of God, the Communist authorities responded with attack dogs and guns, closing the church and blockading the mountain. It was one year after Tito's death, and the regime smelled a revolt by Herzegovinian Croats. This fear was confirmed when children from a neighboring town came back from Mount Podbrdo singing the songs of the Ustashe—the Croatian fascists who are believed to have slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and Croatian dissenters during World War II. (The Ustashe drew its most ardent supporters from Herzegovina, and a mass grave of Serbian victims lies behind the mountain.) Before the year was out, the Franciscan parish priest, Jozo Zovko, was hauled into court on charges of "hostile propaganda" and sentenced to three years in jail.

But the daily apparitions persisted, and the "miracle of Medjugorje" became a focal icon for the passions that would lead to the creation of the Croatian state in 1991 and the ensuing civil war. Even before full-scale war broke out in Bosnia in 1992, the Herzegovinian Croats planned to separate western Herzegovina from the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina and annex the region to the more developed Croatia. They tried to seize the multi-ethnic city of Mostar on the Neretva River as the capital of their self-proclaimed Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna. Instead, they helped destroy it, and today the city remains divided between West (Croatian) and East (Muslim).

Now, as I looked at the rapt faces on the mountaintop, I recalled the message Father Svetozar Kraljević, one of the local Franciscan priests, had delivered at a mass for English-speaking pilgrims: "The Croatian Catholics had no diplomats in the whole world. We were condemned to die. Suddenly Our Lady came and called *you* to become diplomats for the persecuted Catholics of this land." Although the pilgrims may derive some romantic sense of Christian soldiering from such speeches, it seemed to me that they come to Medjugorje to revive their faith and repair their broken lives, not to serve the Croatian cause.

Moments before the apparition was scheduled to occur, a public-address system echoed over the mountain: "Please kneel down facing the cross. Please be quiet. Please no pictures." The message was repeated in several languages as the flashbulbs of the rebellious drew hisses and shouts: "No photo, *ni foto, ne fo tografija*." Rosaries, pressed to lip and held out toward the cros clicked and jingled. The moon ro over the thornbushes. A woma next to me pointed at the glow ar cried, "Look!" Heads turned, camer flashed. More hisses. Th crowd waited for a sign.

Before the miracles—whic have come to include visions of th sun spinning, spontaneous healing and rosaries turning to gold—p Medjugorje on the holy-tours ma the village was basically Nowhere ville, Yugoslavia, a hamlet of 2 families, many of whom lived wit out electricity or plumbing, growi grapes and tobacco and herdi sheep. But even the Communis unable to stop the pilgrims, quick cottoned on to the idea of mirac working when they saw the amou of money that could be ma Homes were expanded into pe sions, hotels sprang up, and by 19 Medjugorje boasted 15,000 beds a a tourist income of as much as $1 million a year, to say nothing of t fortunes donated to the church pilgrims. Some 20 million peo have visited Medjugorje since 198

Today, the town presents an al gorical tableau of the post-Comm nist era. On the grounds of t church, where soldiers and pilgri share benches by the long outd row of multilingual confessio stalls, a ten-foot rendition of t Croatian national shield has b painted on the walkway. The and white checkerboard emblem Herzeg-Bosna—a variant of t Ustashe shield—dangles from rearview mirror of every car, incl ing the taxis cued up outside church to carry pilgrims to the b of Mount Podbrdo for the equi lent of four dollars in virtually currency. In either direction fr the center of town, the road bl like a suburban strip mall, flash with the neon of religious inc gence shops, pensions, pizzerias, duty-free shops. For pilgrims ma ing up or down the mountai main pit stop is the Devotions sh a shack owned and run by Te David Hoop.

Hoop has made Devotions some-
ng of a shrine unto itself, with
door speakers broadcasting mes-
es like "Buddhism, yoga, and
ıscendental meditation will de-
y you. They are the tools of Sa-
," followed by inspirational
zak. In case you don't have your
ı vision on the mountain, Hoop
photographs of Medjugorje
acles and other supernatural
nomena from around the world
ted on his walls: the visionary
ka, a bolt of light piercing her
rt and burning through the
le in her hand; a shrub on
unt Podbrdo swallowed in a ha-
f light, outlining the figure of a
nan; and the "Real Jesus" cruci-
, blood dripping down his body,
an address in Modesto, Cali-
nia, from which you can order
r own photo. And in case you're
ıfused about what exactly, if
thing, happened to you on the
y mountain, Hoop also sells reli-
ıs cassettes, books, and videos
Medjugorje converts recounting
ir experiences, including pop
ician Michael O'Brien's video
unds of Medjugorje: It's Cool to
ıvert."

When war broke out three years
. Medjugorje's commercial carni-
was brought to a halt. But with
town's excellent accommoda-
ıs and easy access to Mostar and
er battle zones, it was adopted as
rrison by Croatian soldiers and a
t of international relief agencies.
ited Nations troops, the UN
h Commissioner for Refugees,
the Red Cross set up regional
dquarters here, to the chagrin of
ıy townspeople. During last year's
ed anniversary celebration one
en, apparently angered that UN
was going to Muslims, pulled a
on Jerrie Hulme, regional direc-
of UNHCR, as he shopped near
church. The gun jammed and
me drove off. The locals also
atened his multi-ethnic Bosnian
f so doggedly that they moved
to the Adriatic coast. And last
ter Croatian Defense Council
/O) soldiers, busily "cleansing"
environs, issued a warning that
ses sheltering Muslims in Medju-
e would be blown up.

Herzeg-Bosna's "holy city" also doubled as a crossroads party town. Young Croats would drive in from the coast to the Bosnian frontier and hang out at Medjugorje's cafés and discos with HVO soldiers, who were pumped up after a day of ethnic "cleansing" in the Mostar region. As in all good garrison towns, Medjugorje's black-market economy thrived, replacing the tourist bazaar with a wartime mall selling guns, drugs, and "duty-free" alcohol and tobacco, as well as stolen cars from Italy, Germany, and Switzerland.

Café Colombo, just next to the church grounds, is now the most popular hangout for pilgrims, politicians, war criminals, soldiers, and aid workers. One evening, while pilgrims at a corner table were sharing their Medjugorje visions, a stony-eyed British mercenary sat telling his wounded war buddy, who had lost both of his legs on a land mine, that their brigade was on a list of war criminals.

They seemed puzzled. The mercenary told me that he was here to help out the Croatian army. His "antiterrorist" brigade, he said, does all the dirty work, such as "cleansing" homes in Mostar. When I asked if it made any difference to him to be based in the "holy" town of Medjugorje, he told me he had no use for religion. "A man is either a good man or a bad man." He paused. "Religion just makes wars."

Although last spring's shaky Croatian-Muslim truce is holding, tensions in town remain high. When buses started unloading pilgrims for the anniversary, a very different brand of tour bus pulled into town, carrying Muslims fleeing central Bosnia. They had been sold one-way tickets by a scam tour operation, and, of course, the Croats would not admit them; now they waited at the new Croatian consulate for visas they would probably never get. On the day I arrived several Muslims were beaten by locals while policemen watched, indifferent.

Even Croatian refugees who fled Bosnian battlefields have found Medjugorje a tough sanctuary. A pair of Croatian girls from Sarajevo working in a "duty-free" shop, selling high-tech gadgetry as well as Virgin Mary ashtrays, told me they were treated like second-class citizens, even traitors, because they had Serbian and Muslim friends in Sarajevo. "Money has changed everyone in this village," one said.

Such sentiments toward the Herzegovinians are typical in the rest of Yugoslavia. When the Medjugorje story first broke, the tabloid press in Belgrade had a field day, mocking the "scientists" who came to measure the earth and air for the presence of God and praising the Herzegovinians for masterminding such a hoax. Yugoslav urbanites have always perceived the place as bandit country, and the religious parade looked like the best hustle yet.



Just as you're not likely to encounter an atheist in a foxhole (especially in Herzegovina), it's hard to find a Medjugorjean who doesn't profess belief in the miracles. After centuries of economic hardship and basement baptisms, the suddenly prosperous villagers could hardly doubt that Mary was their redeemer. When Croatian President Franjo Tudjman visited Medjugorje for peace talks in May 1993, he did not hesitate to enlist Gospa in the cause of Bosnia-Herzegovina's Croats. Her appearance in 1981, he said, presaged and ignited the "reawakening of the Croatian nation." But Medjugorjeans themselves are not without humor about the product they are



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peddling. One former mayor has produced a line of T-shirts that lists the daily spiritual itinerary of the package pilgrimages. The T-shirts read like instructions for a board game, with items such as "9:00 A.M., go to visionary Vicka's healing prayers; 10:00 A.M., English Mass; 11:00 A.M., climb Apparition Hill; 1:00 P.M., get reborn at Father Jozo's; 5:00 P.M., confess; 6:00 P.M., Rosary Mass; 6:40 P.M., visionary's apparition; 9:30 P.M., Ivan's evening prayer group, location to be announced; 11:00 P.M., share."

Two Yugoslav commissions of psychologists, bishops, scientists, and theologians assigned to investigate the Medjugorje phenomenon in the early 1980s concluded that there was no proof to any of the claims of supernatural goings-on. The Vatican does not rule on miracles until they cease. The bishop of Mostar called the visions a hoax perpetrated by the Franciscans. Nevertheless, psychiatrists who subjected the visionaries to a battery of examinations diagnosed them as sane. And indeed they do seem like an ordinary lot—who happen to have been blessed with extraordinary good fortune.

Everyone knows where the visionaries live, and the locals are usually willing to walk a lost pilgrim to their doors. Ivanka Ivanković Eliz and Mirjiana Dragićević Soldo, both married with children, have visions about once a year. Jakov Colo still has daily apparitions but is shy and stays out of the limelight. Marija Pavlović has married and moved with her apparitions to Italy; on the twenty-fifth of each month she transmits Gospa's messages to Medjugorje parish, which in turn faxes them around the world to "friends of Medjugorje." These days only Ivan Dragićević and Vicka Ivanković work the daily crowds in Medjugorje.

Vicka, who lives in a new villa, returns each morning to her parents' more modest home to conduct healing prayers from the veranda. When I stopped by I found the street outside jammed with taxis, pilgrims, and sheep. The Beatitudes, a co munity of French novitiates brown and white robes, sat along stone wall under a fig tree post with war-death notices. Odors fr the pigsty and chicken coop mi gled with burning incense and pu gent bougainvillea. A young wom was skinning a sheep next door.

Vicka stood smiling beneath canopy of grapevines while a n translated her simple teachings the crowd. "It would be very dear Mary and Jesus if we'd stop sinni Our Lady also emphasizes h strong Satan is in the world. T best weapon against Satan is t holy rosary, so we should always c ry with us our holy objects, anyth that has been blessed." Prayers gan. The pilgrims bowed their he and lined up two by two. Vic closed her eyes and clasped t crowns of their heads. Many w shipers burst into tears.

When the foreigners dispers leaving bundles of messages t Vicka promised to pass on Gospa, the visionary ministered the locals. A peasant wom tugged Vicka under the stone st case and pulled up her shirt to hibit the sores plaguing her body suffer because of my daughter. is a good student but she swe and I don't know what to do. you help me?" Vicka hugged "I'll speak to Mary tonight for y Whether or not Vicka is in d contact with Gospa, there something touching about scene. Like the rest of her fel visionaries, Vicka is no theolog but she handles her ministerial with a grace and compassion succor her flock.

By contrast, Ivan Dragićević, other star attraction of Medjug seems a weary and aloof perfor Ivan, who is married to a for Miss Massachusetts, holds his d encounters with the Virgin at P.M. as standing-room-only pu gatherings in the choir loft of James Church. Sporting his tr mark Hawaiian shirt and Air N he stands outside the choir loft before these sessions like a night bouncer, handpicking his audi from the jostling crowd.

When he gave me the nod, I nt up to the packed loft. After vhile the worshipers dropped their knees, and there was in—also kneeling—before a inting of the Virgin Mary. thing was said. After twenty nutes Ivan stood up and left. It s only when everyone began to leave that I realized the session was over.

Wandering one morning ough a corridor of souvenir shops, w a short, red-bearded man gazing at Mount Podbrdo from under the le brim of a sun hat. Beads of eat dripped down his face and ck. With his wooden rosary und his throat, his pink skin and e eyes, he could have been a turn-he-century missionary but for his ns and Nikes. I approached him, ious to know what had inspired n to make a pilgrimage to Bosnia-rzegovina in the midst of Europe's odiest war in half a century.

Dominick answered my question wly and thoughtfully. An Irish-n raised in Wales, Dominick said had grown to dislike Great tain and moved to Germany. One in 1987 a friend told him about lace called Medjugorje where the gin Mary was appearing. "'If you happy with your life, don't go to djugorje,' he said to me. 'It will nge your life forever.'"

Well," Dominick said, "I loved job. I was a professional golfer h the Hamburg Golf Federation, king a lot of money. Anyone uld have thought I was happy h my life. But I wasn't. I had at troubles in my personal life." gazed at the ground and kicked a ne with his foot. "I spent my first s here asking God if he existed. en when I got up to this moun-n, I saw the blue cross, where ry first appeared to those chil-n." As a frequent patron of Ham-g's whorehouses and peep shows, minick had long been fascinated he blue cross gazing down at him n one of the dockside buildings re. When he climbed Mount lbrdo and saw "that same blue ss," he knew God had brought n to Medjugorje. He went to confession for the first time in fifteen years. One day he climbed up to the peak of Križevac Mountain next to Mount Podbrdo, where the stone cross spreads its wide arms over the village. But God was calling him to the smaller hill behind it.

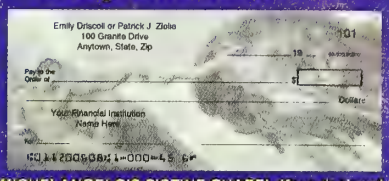
"So I clambered up there and sat down. 'Okay, God,' I said. 'I'm here. What do you want from me?' Suddenly my mind was filled with the most impure thoughts you could imagine—sexual fantasies, scenes from my life. It was the work of Satan, the liar, trying to muddle me up, putting things in my head which he knows are my great weaknesses."

But on the way down, a bright inner light filled Dominick's spirit. "I wanted to cry with happiness," he said in his high, questioning voice, tears shimmering over his blue eyes. From that moment on, everything in Dominick's life was an allegory of spiritual conversion. At the base of the hill a woman asked for his Bible: God wanted Dominick to pass on His word. On the road back to the village the only person in sight was a novice preparing to enter the monastery: God was urging Dominick to join a religious order. A baby's cries echoed through the fields: Dominick heard his own rebirth.

He returned to Hamburg, quit his job, gave his television and records to an orphanage, and prayed. He had many strange visions. The head of an African woman appeared to him in prayer. He could not interpret it. Weeks later he received a response from the Franciscan order to which he had written. Inside was a postcard of the same African woman's head. Should he take this to mean he was to join the Franciscans, or go to Africa? He decided to join the Franciscans. But inside the monastery he was still haunted by his sexual fantasies. "I'm quite sick, you see," he said.

Dominick described depressions, neuroses, obsessions, attempted suicide. "I was locked up in an institution for ten months. I cut myself up quite badly with knives and scissors." He recently returned to Medjugorje with the same friend who had introduced him to the town, a British man who runs pilgrimage tours.

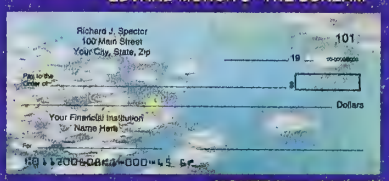
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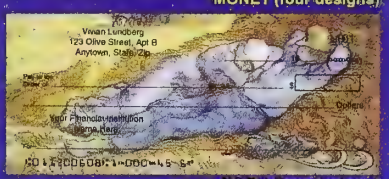
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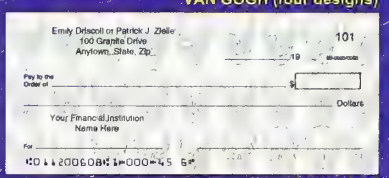
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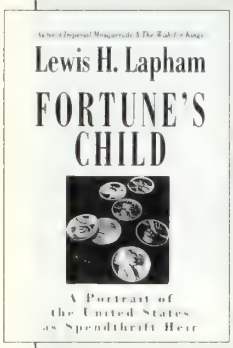
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"I've spent these first few days saying, 'Lord, I'm here. You know my desperation, you know what's going on. What will you say about it?'" He lifted his eyes and held them on mine, his brows rising into a question. With his thumb, he rubbed the sign of the cross on my forehead. "I wonder," he said, "what your approaching me means."

Dominick seemed a little surprised by his own story—to hear it laid out, step by step, like a Canterbury tale. The narrative of conversion followed a formula that I heard from countless pilgrims during my stay in Medjugorje, but it had a twist: after the wages of sin, the confessions, and the surrender to faith, Dominick remained tormented. He was a loner and didn't seem to fit either of the two strands of the Medjugorje hustle—the package pilgrimage or the politics of the war.

Our parting was awkward; during our talk we had walked some distance and were now blocked by an international film crew shooting the Hollywood version of the Medjugorje story. The filmmakers, perched atop the roof of Souvenirs La Paloma, were shouting directions to scores of Bosnian Croat refugees lumbering up the mountain, working their rosaries, making their first pilgrimage as paid extras on a movie set. A wind machine blew dust into their faces, simulating the army helicopters of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that had menaced Medjugorje's first devotees in 1981. A dozen Croatian soldiers, who'd been ordered to play Yugoslav army soldiers, sat looking miserable in their woolen uniforms with muzzled Rottweilers straining at their feet.

In *Gospa*, the film, Morgan Fairchild plays a nun and Martin Sheen plays the hero, Father Jozo, the priest who has masterminded Medjugorje's twin campaigns to redeem the Croatian people and to service the world's broken souls. When I visited the real Father Jozo at his Franciscan parish in the hills of Siroki Brijeg, about a half hour's drive from Medjugorje, he told me, "People come prostrating their lives, their crosses, their hearts, their vows, and their needs, and they meet here their mother. My duty is to make that meeting succes[s]ful." But when I heard him addre[ss] thousands of Croatian pilgrims at a anniversary mass from the bandstan behind St. James Church, he tran[s]formed Gospa from a messenger [of] peace into a Croatian warrio[r] "Gospa," he shouted, "protects th[e] Croatian church! Gospa is calling u[s] on her people to pick up their sword[s] put on their uniforms, and stop th[e] power of Satan!"

Ironically, Father Jozo had not first believed that the children [of] Medjugorje were having visions [of] the Virgin. He was out of tow[n] when the first apparitions were r[e]ported, in June 1981. "When I r[e]turned," he said, "I thought, 'Tha[t]s all I need. I went away for a few da[ys] and they immediately laid a trap. [I] thought it was a plot by the Comm[u]nists to destroy the Catholic chur[ch] and our credibility in this area." Jo[zo] was pressured to denounce the ch[il]dren as insane, and he was tempt[ed] to cooperate. But then, like Moses [in] the desert, he heard a voice: *Go [to] and protect the children.* "It w[as] Gospa," Jozo said. "I left the chur[ch] and the children ran toward me a[nd] cried, 'Protect us! The police are [af]ter us!' So I hid them."

Far from quashing the religi[ous] happenings in Medjugorje, Fatl[er] Jozo's subsequent arrest, torture, a[nd] imprisonment authenticated t[he] "miracles" and breathed new life [in]to the legacy of Franciscan marty[r]ology, which goes back to the fifteen[th] century, when the Turks invad[ed] Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Ron[an] Catholic clergy fled. The "bro[wn] robes," as they're fondly called, s[uf]fered the same persecutions as th[e] flock but sustained the small Cr[oa]tian tribe throughout four hund[red] years of Ottoman rule. Although [the] Catholic clergy returned in the [late] nineteenth century, the Francisc[ans] remained the Church in the he[arts] and minds of the Herzegovin[ian] Croats. The miracle of Gospa [and] Father Jozo's suffering were qui[ckly] spun into one more thread in [the] mythic tapestry. "The regime [was] scared," he told me. "Gospa's m[ov]ement started to shake the four[da]tions of Communism. It was the [be]ginning of the change of the wor[ld].

t was also Father Jozo's step-
g-stone to pastoral stardom.
ousands claim to have been
in in the spirit"—a ritualized
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Mary, inscribed with instruc-
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ow seductive voice told the
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r. The audience wept.

o Father Jozo, everyone appears
potential messenger. When I
our meeting he told me, "It is
wish of the Blessed Mother to
nge your life and the lives of
r readers." He sent me off with a
verbal missives: Western culture
brought hate and war to his
ntry; the West is to blame for
porting the Serbian aggressors.
nd now," he said, "while the
bs still occupy one third of
Croatia, the West expects
us to talk about peace?"

n the days leading up to the an-
ersary celebration, the biggest
rist event since the outbreak of
, I watched the townspeople
paring the sets for their
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s buses from Poland, England,
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The Root of the Conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan"; it calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of Territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab states possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

> "Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the 'West Bank'."

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian Arab terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time", neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank".

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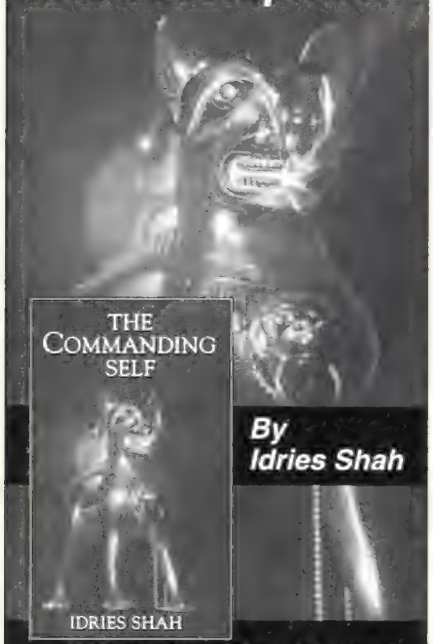
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porches were colonized for "sharing sessions," laying on of hands, speaking in tongues. Two circus-size tents behind the church, once occupied by refugees, were crammed with the sleeping bags, Coleman stoves, and crucifixes of low-budget pilgrims. Croatian and Herzeg-Bosna shields festooned the streets and fluttered over the crosses held by the peace pilgrims marching in from miles away. Men and women, clutching crosses and rosaries, crawled on their knees around the great white statue of Mary in front of the church.

Near the outside confessional booths, I saw Dominick again, rocking from one leg to the other, walking the length of the church grounds, his head bowed. He looked up and his eyes brightened. When I asked him how he was, he said he wasn't doing so well but wanted to thank me for what I had done for him. I didn't understand. "I mean the talk we had the other night—or was it day?—on Mount Podbrdo." He looked away and winced. "I was going up Apparition Hill at that moment to take my life." He paused. "But you saved me. God sent you to me as a sign." He smiled, his eyes moistened, and again he made a cross with his thumb on my forehead. "God bless you, dear. I must go now for the sacraments."

I felt I had been in Medjugorje too long. Father Jozo regarded me as his agent, Dominick called me his savior, and in Medjugorje's economy of allegory, this all seemed to make sense. For the pilgrims everything here was refracted through the lens of religious significance. "Satan has stirred up this war to stop people from coming to Medjugorje and converting," a woman from Nebraska told me. A charismatic renewalist, she had heard about Medjugorje on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and now she lived here, helping to organize sessions between the pilgrims and the visionaries.

As I walked away from Dominick, Medjugorje's evening performance began. The setting sun threw swaths of red and umber onto the thunderclouds gathering above the mountains behind the twin spires of St. James Church. The cypress trees swayed. Swallows ricocheted in and out of the open church doors wh the mass played on, as it does fr dawn to dusk. Like a cradle so the sounds from the church ming with the pilgrims' voices and seem to lull the town into abeyance.

The crowd on the mountaint that full-moon night waited fo sign. Gospa, the visionaries said, ways appeared bathed in lig Twenty minutes of silence. A fli er of light against the night s Heads turned. Candles crackled the stones. The blood drained fr a girl's hands as she clasped them prayer, her eyes never moving fr the white aluminum cross. Th suddenly, it was over. "Our L came joyfully and thanked all you for coming. Our lady prayed all of us and blessed all of us and pecially the sick," called a vo over the loudspeaker, first in C tian, then in English, French, G man, Italian. "That will be Please be careful going down hill." Silence. Confusion. Pe examined the faces of their ne bors. Older men and women st gled to get up off their kn bruised by the rocks. "It's kind letdown," said one woman. "But knows we're here. That's all matters."

Afterward, down at Café Col bo, a group of pilgrims wond aloud at what had happened on paration Hill that evening. sought reassurance from Gos message "Blessed are those who lieve and do not see." Behind t a tableful of HVO soldiers plo their next campaign in nort Bosnia. An Italian baroness fli her way among the tables, breath ly exhorting non-believers to vert. "The Virgin has *come*!" she nounced. "The Virgin is *really* he

In Medjugorje, the sacred the profane have forged a surre liance. To its foreign visitors town offers the comforting fa of a nation built on a com faith. But nothing is simple h Herzegovina, a place where gious belief has everything t with primitive identity, poli power, and territorial conquest nothing at all to do with the grim's progress.

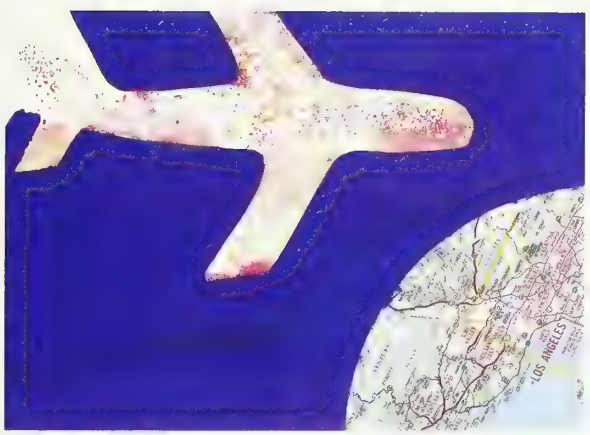
BRAIN DRAIN

By Drury Pifer

We counted the ballots. nimously, we voted to e England and make a life in the American t. Our salaries had not sured up to our genius. middle-aged among us spent their best years ed alive in laboratories cyclotrons, sacrificing fort and youth for the non good. Our younger eagues were no longer ng to deny themselves best cuts of meat, a fling Majorca. Our wives had since run off with shoe sales- and newscasters. Our husbands moved in with actresses. Un- lded, underpaid, denied respect ir own land, we felt confident of bility to achieve economic par- h the United States.

ur accomplishments were be- dispute. We had made Boolean ra a household word. We had d the oil shortage with reconsti- l sludge. The French were envi- the Germans irate. Yet at home ere taken for granted. We were merely brilliant—the small gray le in white coats, obsessed with bored everyone else.

ue, we were deserting England er most desperate hour. Parlia- t had lost its brain and bite. A ping ignorance afflicted the



middle-class mind. New strains of tatterdemalion savages ripened and multiplied like fruit flies in working-class neighborhoods. Who now gave thought to Plato or Planck? Who remembered what Maynard Keynes did with Vanessa Bell? Riots in dim suburbs drove away young geologicians who might once have joined our thinning ranks. Biologists were fleeing Battersea and Plimsole. Our letters to the *Times* fell on ears no longer tuned to the music of reason.

We brought aboard the aircraft trepanned monkeys and cancerous ducks. The airline, operated by the Panamanian government, kindly provided bananas and pond weed. Our briefcases bulged with working papers and pork pies. Below us the Sargasso Sea gave way to the jungles of Georgia, the beige deserts of Arizona, the mauve chasms of New Mexico. We regarded the wilderness below as a measure of our courage. We were exchanging an island that resembled a Fabergé egg for a trackless wasteland. But science is nothing if not an adventure. Even the least adventurous among us agreed that we would rather perish in Nevada than creep back to the priggish proprieties of Cambridge. We trembled like young lovers at the words "Los Angeles."

Approaching the Pacific Rim, we repaired in good order to the airplane lavatory and changed into jeans and running shoes. We were determined not to fall behind in the fox-trot of American science. A young steward from Tenochtitlán cut our hair in the popular American style—bald at the back, feathery on top. We practiced American words: closet for cupboard, hood for bonnet, trunk for boot.

The Los Angeles airport was not what we had anticipated. It resembled a Hindu village in the throes of a religious festival. Followers of Krishna wrapped in saffron sheets sprinkled their shiny scalps with flower petals and whirled in fits of epileptic ecstasy. Hawkers pressed life-size blow-up dolls and dildos upon us. A person in snakeskin trousers and gold lamé boots was pursued by very young women. A female bodyguard carried him to the safety of his

Pifer is a playwright and novelist. His book, Innocents in Africa, *was published earlier this year by Harcourt Brace.*

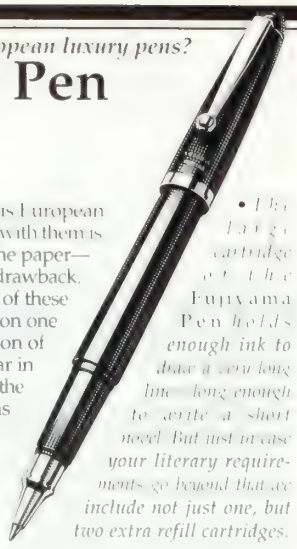
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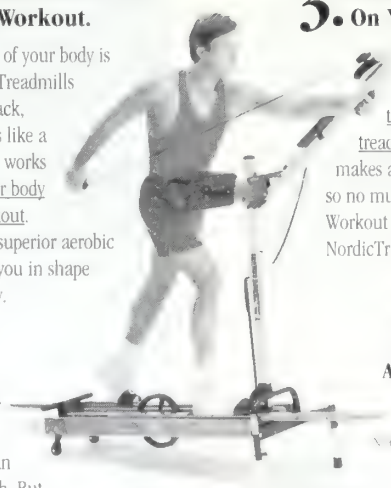
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canceled to accommodate a co
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We argued with the hotel cl
stressing our importance for the
ture of mankind. We boasted an
us the discoverer of black hol
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signs of intelligent life in m
fragments, and the only two n
physicists in existence. Our case
pressed by an Oxford mather
cian, a man of legendary tact
discretion. His muted applic
was met with guffaws.

We repaired to dinner. The
taurant served raw flesh and
Too polite to walk out, we ga
quietly on mollusks and s
urchins wrapped in seawee
fleet of taxis then distributed
number among three n
in Burbank.

The morning papers ignore
arrival. The top story in the *Lo
geles Times* concerned a soft-
sweetener that lowered the r
ductive capacity of human fe
(We had invented a sweetene
promoted fertility.) No rain ha
en in Bakersfield for sever
months. (We could produce
anywhere in half an hour, give
use of a single aircraft and a g
of plain yogurt.) Fat was de
more deadly than civil war.
had developed thirty-two indu
uses for fat.) Of our existence
city remained calmly oblivious

Dispirited, we reminded our
of our importance. We could n
get how the rain forests were
turned into toilet paper, ho
ozone layer had begun to res
Swiss cheese. We knew that p
everywhere were growing old
no reason whatsoever. Entrop
on the march, and we were th
who could do something ab
Only we could reverse man
woeful march to oblivion.

We wrote letters to the he
every research institute in the

assured the presidents of great ersities that we were willing to ne chaired professorships. While ıumanities degenerated into sor- quabbling over the psychosexual ɔrtance of Disneyland, we boldly ɛsted experiments in organic soft- and lurking quarks.

ɔ phones rang in the swelter of American night. Our impromp- isits to various campuses were ed as an embarrassment. Secre- ɛs in departments of physics ɛ phone calls and sent us to of- that no longer existed. Profes- stared in our direction like tened deer. We stood smiling in doorways of brightly lit class- ns, where eager young hands above marble-smooth armpits. rs quietly closed in our faces. campus police ticketed our al car in the faculty parking lot. 'e hired a public relations ex- He was young and smart and a cream-colored jacket and soft shoes. We were invited to join four cadaverously attractive models in a swimming pool with an underwater photographer. Our man had plans to get us into a very popular magazine devoted to the female body and its external attributes. To our surprise, he succeeded. The article compared us to the Beatles.

Our hopes rose when a garrulous professor of psychosociology recognized us in the street. He declared he would "go to bat" for us in his department at a local college, a historic landmark manned by recombinant nuns. He turned out to be a drunken humanist whom the nuns retained out of charity. We pressed our qualifications, but the only job they had to offer involved a part-time stint by someone, preferably Native American, who could handle a course on gender in Thomas Aquinas.

We met in Aspen to reconsider our options. No longer were we the unified group that had abandoned old England a few months before. Some had become more English than ever and now disapproved of everything American. Others had picked up the American manner and sat with their feet on the table, guzzling beer from plastic bottles. A minority grew shrill and demanded imaginary rights from those who had no idea what they were talking about. We found ourselves in agreement on one thing only. The situation was dire, and extreme measures were called for. A chosen few (the rest agreed) would douse themselves with petrol in the parking lot of Neiman Marcus and run through the streets setting fire to boutiques and hair salons. The others would hand out pamphlets that outlined the sad effect of frivolity on human survival.

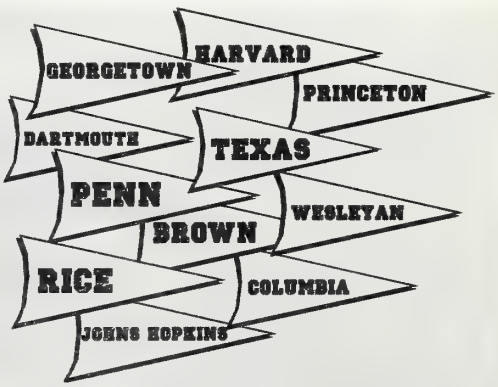
Before carrying out our plan, we announced at a sparsely attended press conference that during our short sojourn in the United States we had discovered two new ele-

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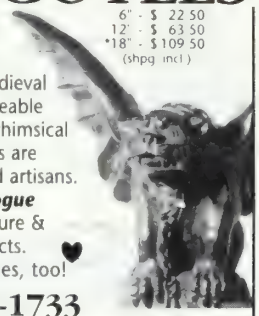
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S	A	Y	S	O	X	O	S	T	L	E	R	S

NOTES FOR "LOVE AND KISSES"
The completed diagram contained three games of ticktacktoe (shaded), one of which (the farthest right) produced a winner, "O." *Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).*

ACROSS: 1. homonym; 4. res(is)t; 8. has-p(in); 11. too(l); 12. X-(oprah-grey*); 15. E(XX)on; 17. homonym, nu; 18. to(rev.)-her; 19. O-(in-Saxon*); 21. homonym; 22. (mohican)s-led; 24. pun; 28. two mngs.; 29. homonym (tee)-box; 31. go(bbl)es; 33. homonym; 34. (dr)oops; 35. rev.; 36. pun; 37. *; 38. pun, Lear-y; 41. hidden; 43. E.S.-sex; 44. pun; 45. hidden; 46. rev.; 47. box-off-ices; 48. says-O; 49. *. DOWN: 1. it-ems; 2. dox(logo*)ies; 3. homonym; 4. rev.; 5. hidden; 6. *; 7. rev.; 8. hidden; 9. *; 10. hidden; 13. *; 14. homonym; 16. f(oodles)s; 20. none-X, rev.; 23. R(ed.-d(irecting)-Fox)X; 25. a-but; 26. To(X)on; 27. *; 28. cap-Let's; 30. two mngs.; 32. homonym; 33. exud(es)*; 34. *; 37. O-nice; 39. E.S.P.-(Jul)y; 40. *; 42. *.

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ments, designed a mathemat
based on the spiral, discovere
cure for agoraphobia (by replica
in software the alpha rhythms
reptilian consciousness), solved
problem of fusion reaction, squa
the circle by applying quadratic e
tics, and created three working m
els of a new postmodern mora
that might well save the West f
its current malaise.

Some interest was expressed
shopping-news circular carried
story on page two, under a large
vertisement for designer boots.
were mentioned on page seven of
Washington Post under the head
"British Irony Gets Old Quic
Meanwhile, three of our num
were run over in Phoenix by mo
cyclists who mistool
for Mexicans.

We dropped the auto-da-fé
tion and agreed to blow up Los
geles. We designed and manu
tured the first fusion bomb in
form of a Number 5 Underw
typewriter and smuggled it into
offices of the *Los Angeles Ti*
The bomb was set to go when
letters "OJ" were typed in
quence. We informed CBS that
Angeles would shortly vanish
the map. The story was not a
on any network.

We gathered in a bar outsic
Phoenix. The coverage on
evening news was good, but
bartender said that the
storm in *Terminat*
was better.

We flew to Chicago to id
fy ourselves as the Los Ang
bombers. No one came to our
conference. Great clouds of
dust blew up and down the can
of the city. It had not raine
two years. Three of our genet
blundered into a doubtful ne
borhood and were mugged. O
the victims was injured and we
ried him to a hospital. He ha
insurance and was refused t
ment. We repaired to the shelt
a university campus. No one
had heard of us. In the stu
cafeteria we ordered hambu
with fries, and wept.

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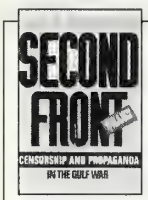
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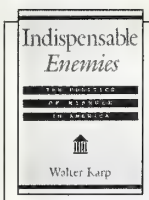
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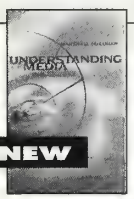
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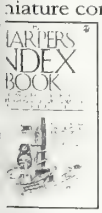
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DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1

LETTERS

Continued from page 5

something illegal. It turned on two facts: that the Clintons put up much less than half the initial investment in Whitewater but nevertheless got half the ownership; and that the then governor's partner subsequently managed a failing savings and loan institution that was subject to state supervision by a banking commissioner the governor appointed. Nothing in Lyons's article undercuts either of those statements. We also noted that Mrs. Clinton did legal work for the bank while her husband was governor, also a fact that Lyons doesn't challenge. The central question we raised about this state of affairs was whether it was appropriate for a governor to be involved in a business deal with the owner of a business regulated by the state.

On Mrs. Clinton's amazingly successful investment in cattle futures, we again never suggested that she did something illegal. We simply reported the existence of the deal, something the Clintons had never disclosed, and we reported that Mrs. Clinton was guided in her investment by the chief lawyer for the biggest agribusiness company in the state.

There you have the gist of the two major stories we broke. We have no great passion for these old Arkansas tales. We did not think they should shake the foundations of the republic. And, of course, we would much rather devote our reporting efforts to current issues confronting the country. But it was clear to us that these were stories that had to be reported and then not suppressed. They had to be reported, we felt, because these were highly unusual investments that the Clintons had never disclosed and, indeed, had gone to considerable lengths to conceal. For me as an editor the basic test of fairness was this: Would we have printed these stories if the name had been Phil Gramm or Ed Meese rather than Bill Clinton? It was clear to me that we would have felt obliged to do so.

Lyons gets a lot very wrong in his article:

He says the banking commissioner, Ms. Schaffer, could not have acted under state law. He should r
the law; he is wrong. It was
obligation to act.

He says that a report by fed
bank examiners on Madison in 1
was no evidence that the bank
insolvent because it was not form
ly an audit but only prepared for
pervisory purposes. He apparen
doesn't know what bank examin
do. What they do is supervise,
what they concluded in this c
was that Madison was in trouble.

He says that our reporter relied
a man named Sheffield Nelson.
refers to a transcript of a conversat
with Jim McDougal [the owne
Madison Guaranty Savings and Lo
that Nelson released to the press
evidence to back up that assertion
fact, the transcript was released a
our [initial] Whitewater article
peared, not before, and mainly ha
do with the article. So it could
have been the basis for the articl
know the reporting effort that
made on this story and what we
and didn't get from Nelson. What
got, basically, was McDougal's ph
number. No one, I can assure y
handed the *Times* this story.

Lyons challenges a statemen
our article that Madison was on
the largest state-chartered savi
and loan institutions in Arkan
but to do so, he relies on a lis
banking institutions that inclu
federally chartered savings and l
institutions. Again, he apparen
does not know the difference.

Lyons criticizes an article we p
lished last year for relying on all
tions made by David Hale. In f
although we knew about Hale's a
gations and although we had in
viewed him, we deliberately withh
publication of his allegations bec
we knew he was an unreliable c
acter who was plea-bargaining w
the U.S. attorney on another c
We never wrote an article about
allegations, and mentioned them
ly in passing after they had been
ported in detail in other papers.

I could go on, but my drift is cl
I am arguing that Lyons's article
in no sense a careful rebuttal b
scattershot, sloppy polemical ass
on the integrity of our reporters
of this newspaper. In lambasting

s reports, he makes much of our
orials. Neither I nor the reporters
worked on these stories had
hing to do with our editorials or
other expression of opinion in
paper. We practice a policy of
t separation between the news
rtment and the editorial page. It
never violated in this case, I can
e you.

may be, when the Whitewater
r has finally played itself out,
the country will conclude it
't amount to much. That will
ine with us. But the basic facts
eported will still remain true—
fact that the Clintons had a
nership with the head of a fail-
savings and loan while Mr.
ton was governor and the S&L
under state supervision, and the
that Mrs. Clinton made all that
ey in futures. The President, as
ndidate, had claimed to have
e substantial financial disclo-
s, but he did not report these
s. We did. Having ascertained
n, I still don't see how we could
e done otherwise.

am sorry to have gone on at this
th. I hope I haven't tried your
ence, but, as you will under-
d, I cannot take lightly attacks
he integrity of this paper. I'm
eful that you took the trouble to
s know your concerns.

oh Lelyveld
cutive Editor, *New York Times*
York City

e Lyons responds:

seph Lelyveld's letter is extraor-
rily revealing. It's in essence a
tical document, having less to
with the ruck and moil of the
itewater controversy than with
tioning the *New York Times* as it
ies to be seen: lordly, disinterest-
nd magisterial.

ence Lelyveld feels free to ig-
the substance of what I actual-
rote and said. He gallantly de-
ls aspects of the Whitewater
y that nobody disputes. He de-
what everyone from Senator
nse D'Amato to the *Times*'s
editorial writers has understood
e the meaning and import of Jeff
th's reporting, and disregards as-
pects of the newspaper's coverage he now finds inconvenient.

Much like Gerth's original reporting, Lelyveld's letter is filled with factual errors, all running in a prosecutorial direction. Also as in Gerth's work, fact, fiction, and insinuation are so closely woven into one fabric that untangling them requires careful explication.

Now then, let's get down to cases: It's simply not true that "the Clintons put up much less than half the initial investment in Whitewater but nevertheless got half the ownership." Gerth failed to examine public records in the Marion County courthouse. Had he looked, he would have discovered that the $20,000 the Clintons borrowed for the $203,000 investment was not the sum total of their contribution but only the down payment. Along with the McDougals, the Clintons were also jointly and individually responsible for a $183,000 mortgage note.

Whether or not it's "highly unusual" for two young couples to enter a real estate partnership (or, for that matter, to profit from commodities trading tips made by a good friend) I leave to *Harper's Magazine* readers to determine. But it's also demonstrably false that the Clintons "had never disclosed and, indeed, had gone to considerable lengths to conceal" their Whitewater investment. The first Whitewater story in the Little Rock press appeared in the *Arkansas Democrat* on October 24, 1979, during Clinton's first term as governor, and made occasional appearances on the business pages in later years.

One reason Arkansas reporters made little of Whitewater during Jim McDougal's 1990 bank-fraud trial in U.S. District Court (he was acquitted) was that the story had so clearly failed to develop. What's more, Jeff Gerth told the *American Journalism Review* that he became curious when he found an entry labeled "Whitewater" in one of the Clintons' state financial disclosure forms. They had released records dating as far back as Bill Clinton's first term as governor and Hillary's employment with the Rose Law Firm—substantially more than required by law.

Maybe failure to publicize Hil-

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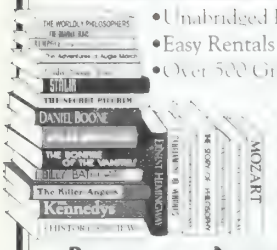
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lary's 1978–79 commodity trad
dicates a wish to keep them
wraps, but the Clintons did n
to conceal them. Because her c
futures mentor, Jim Blair, gave
lar help to about a dozen peo
many of whom, like Blair hi
lost money when they stayed
game a few months longer
Hillary—the trades were fairly
mon knowledge in Fayetteville

Jeff Gerth also told the Am
Journalism Review that his first
on the Whitewater story was t
one of two Arkansans he k
Sheffield Nelson. If Nelson
Gerth nothing more than Jim
Dougal's phone number, he
very much out of character. I
his 1990 gubernatorial camp
Nelson made an issue of Cli
ties to McDougal, and he's do
best to flog the issue ever since

Yet another of Gerth's sourc
cording to Trudy Lieberman i
Columbia Journalism Review, wa
izens United, the well-funded,
wing Republican organization
Floyd Brown. The publisher
organization's newsletter, C
Watch, told *CJR* that "we
worked closer with the *New*
Times than the *Washington T*
Gerth responded, "If Citizens U
has some document that's relev
take it. I check it out like an
else." (Had Gerth done any
ing at all, he might have spare
self the embarrassment of fals
porting that the state of Ark
under Bill Clinton had loaned
Foods $9 million.)

As to my own allegedly "
and "shoddy" misrepresentatio
me answer by dissecting the f
ing sentence from Jeff Gerth's
nal March 8, 1992, Whitewat
ry: "After Federal regulators
that McDougal's savings instit
Madison Guaranty, was inso
meaning it faced possible clos
the state, Clinton appointed
state securities commissioner
had been a lawyer in a firm th
resented the savings and loan.'

First, federal regulators did
fact, determine that Madison
anty was insolvent between
and 1986, the years Gerth's
covered. The S&L took issue

1984 Federal Home Loan Bank
d's preliminary report, prevailed
he issues, entered into a formal
rvisory agreement with the
BB, then hired the bank exam-
herself to carry out agreed-upon
ms. Unlike Gerth, I've con-
d these facts with both Walter
, then director of supervision at
FHLBB, and Sarah Worsham
kins, the examiner who wrote
report from which Gerth selec-
y quoted.
cond, Arkansas regulators had
hoice except to defer to the fed-
agencies that held the real regu-
y power—the Federal Savings
Loan Insurance Corporation
IC) and the FHLBB. Indeed,
Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals
t. Louis had ruled in the 1985
of another Arkansas S&L that
state and federal law conflict-
ederal law took precedence.
nce Lelyveld's complaint about
elative size of state-chartered vs.
ally chartered S&Ls is a cavil.
dard reference sources list them
ther because the distinction is
ally historical.)
nird, what I still find shocking is
Jeff Gerth was notified of these
in writing by former Arkansas
rities Commissioner Beverly
tt Schaffer long before his orig-
March 1992 Whitewater arti-
'It may be important for you to
v," she wrote Gerth in February
, "that state law grants the sav-
and loan supervisor no emer-
y acquisition authority similar
at of the FHLBB and FSLIC."
ssett Schaffer's certified letter
ut begging the FSLIC to move
Madison was dated December 10,
?; she got no answer. (Federal
lators finally closed Madison's
s in February 1989.) Altogether,
detailed, persuasive account of
lealings with Madison Guaranty
e to twenty typed pages. Inter-
gly, the memos fail to mention
tewater. Bassett Schaffer says
is because she was unaware of
Clinton-McDougal partnership
because Gerth never mentioned
Her account squares not only
the documentary record but
the record of every knowledge-
source—state, federal, and pri-

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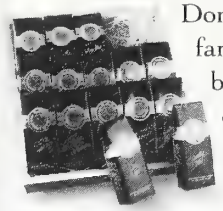
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vate—that I could find.

Rather than exploring or r ting these complexities, Gerth ply shoved Bassett Schaffer's m out of sight. His March 8, 1992, portrayed her as suspiciously fo ful. Bassett Schaffer, Gerth w "said she did not remember the eral examination of Madison." sequent articles—like Gerth's cember 15, 1993, Whitewater a in the *Times*—made her the linchpin of an implied conspira keep Madison Guaranty oper Jim McDougal's benefit. Frank doubt *Times* editors knew the m existed. Had *I* concealed such dence from *Harper's Magazine*, pect that my byline would neve pear in this magazine again.

February Index Sources

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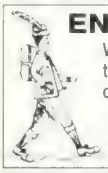
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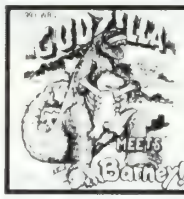
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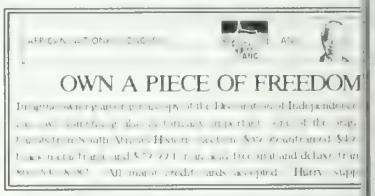
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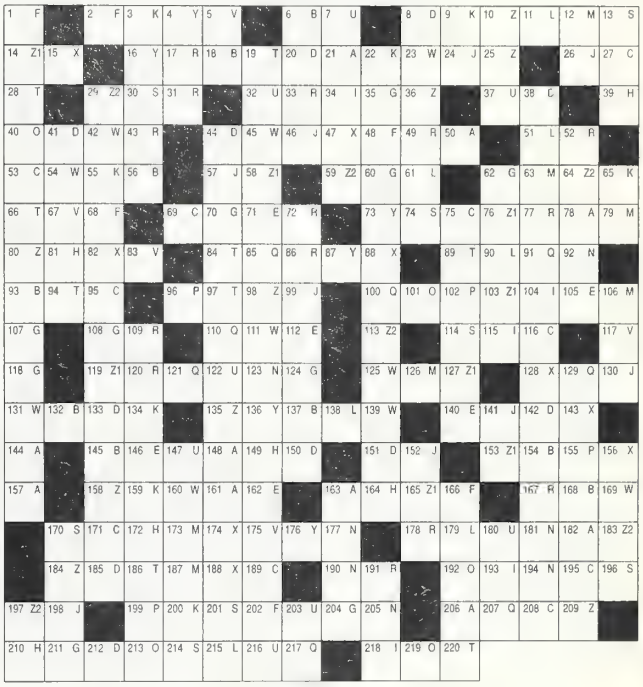
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 146

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 74.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Whippersnapper — 163 21 182 161 157 50 144 / 148 78 206

B. Self-evident — 93 154 132 168 18 6 56 / 137 145

C. 1907 Ross-Lehar musical (2 wds. after "The") — 208 189 171 195 116 53 75 95 / 27 69

D. Compulsion, effectuation — 8 133 38 151 20 212 185 44 / 150 41 142

E. Packed in an orderly way — 162 71 146 140 105 112

F. Pretentious art geared to popular appeal — 48 1 166 68 202 2

G. Perceptive — 70 204 107 60 124 108 62 118 / 211 35

H. "At lovers' perjuries, /They say, Jove ____" (*Romeo and Juliet*) — 149 172 164 81 39 210

I. Small, flat cake — 218 115 104 193 34

J. Furnishing — 57 26 152 24 130 198 141 46 / 90

K. Making a snarl of — 22 3 9 134 200 159 55 65

L. Disreputable; tawdry — 11 90 179 138 215 61 51

M. Wicked; unchaste, lewd — 126 173 12 187 106 63 79

N. Alterations; switches — 177 190 194 123 205 181 92

O. Bad checks; birds of the hawk family — 213 219 101 40 192

P. Bills, checks — 155 102 96 199

Q. Spends time, frequents a place (2 wds.) — 110 129 121 217 100 207 85 91

R. Ken Follett novel, film with Donald Sutherland and Kate Nelligan (4 wds.) — 49 43 178 120 167 33 72 191 / 86 31 109 17 77 52

S. Keep back, restrain — 114 201 196 74 30 13 214 170

T. Snubbing, refusing bluntly — 28 66 89 97 186 84 19 94 / 220

U. Tincture, admixture — 203 216 180 147 32 122 37 7

V. Carries, packs — 175 117 67 5 83

W. Argentine poet (1805–51, "Elvira") — 45 160 125 139 131 54 42 169 / 23 111

X. Swiss psychiatrist (1844–1922) after whom an inkblot test was named — 188 88 156 15 128 82 174 47 / 143

Y. Preserving; economical; containing an exception — 73 16 4 176 136 87

Z. Talus — 80 25 135 158 36 184 10 98 / 209

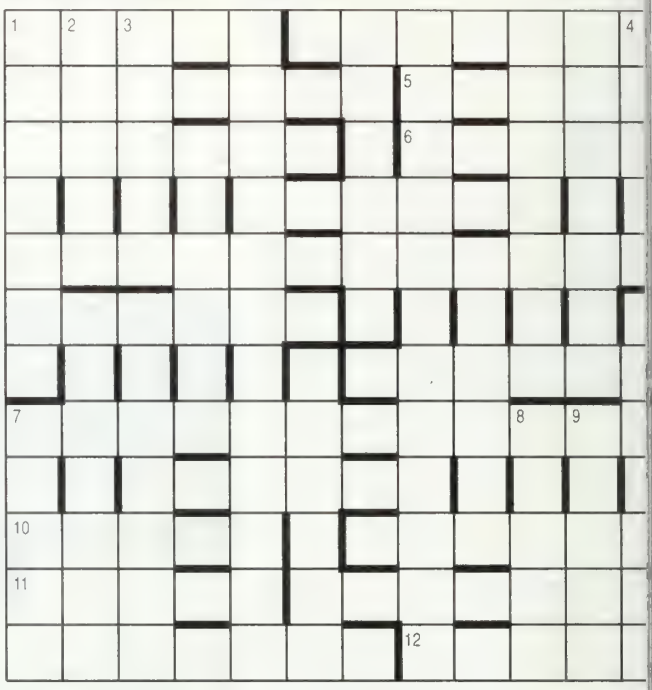
Z1. Cruel — 103 14 58 119 76 153 165 127

Z2. Indication of imminent danger, harm, etc. — 183 59 64 197 113 29

At Sixes and Sevens (and Twelves)

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

Clue answers are all five, six, seven, or twelve letters long, but only the five-letter words have their locations indicated. Solvers must determine where the other answers belong using the five-letter answers as guides. Answers include two proper names. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



FIVE-LETTER WORDS

1. Set to go to court about it
2. Cleverly untie knot
3. Bar switched to gin
4. Continental go-go clubs make you old-fashioned certainly (*hyph.*)
5. State in which to listen to *Hair*
6. Vehicle infested with insects
7. Clothing items you get in boxes?
8. Spellbinder gives company a bit of uplift
9. Spot rising electric company type
10. Overweight outside, inside exhausted
11. More liberal, moving right, like Jacques
12. Male parties with southern names

SIX-LETTER WORDS

a. Mobilize one left out—it could make one half dead
b. Not regular meters in the least
c. Doffs suncap, head to toe
d. This is more expensive, *Reader's Digest*
e. "Wee Small Hours" is nearly Eliot
f. Tax cut
g. Proclaim that woman hairless but topless
h. Food in the ground, not air
i Altered indeed, it educates from inside
j. As crime doesn't end, it can become a national scandal

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS

a. Bill gold one for Italians
b. Incorporated a following in the audience
c. In problems of the heart, one gains being unsure
d. Being more conventional, he pays off his debts
e. Study can and must get complicated
f. Falls again clumsily over an army man
g. Fools making gibes about holy man
h. They'll hurt you, it's said unfortunately, in streets
i. Sugar-coated, May passed away
j. Listen to, for example, gossip

TWELVE-LETTER WORDS

a. Mad Hatter drones, "They're doubly two-faced"
b. Takes out additional servers, but nothing is taken in
c. More "D" bus, taxi rescheduling on the one hand; on the other hand too . . .
d. Holds bloodsuckers up to the light? They keep the flame high

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "At Sixes and Sevens (and Twelves)," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the December puzzle, "Short Order," are Pam Prothro, Atlanta, Georgia; Dany Adams, Seattle, Washington; and Martha Howard, Williamsburg, Virginia.



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Dean Koontz is one of those far-out kind of guys. Yes indeed, where TV signals can't even go and cars dare to tread, that's where you'll find Dean.

In his travels, satellite dish salesman Dean Koontz Who knows who he'll sell to nex

He sells satellite dishes, door-to-door, to the folks in the northeastern parts of Washington state. Which takes him to such out-of-reach places as Kettle Falls, Lost Creek and Daisy. Along such rough and rocky byways as Deadman Creek Road, the Tiger Highway and even Pothole Lane.

Now, with him on his gnarly road travels, you'll find what he calls his "go almost anywhere vehicle." A Saturn SL1, as a matter of fact. Dean says it gets him everywhere he has to go. And he has quite a ways to go.

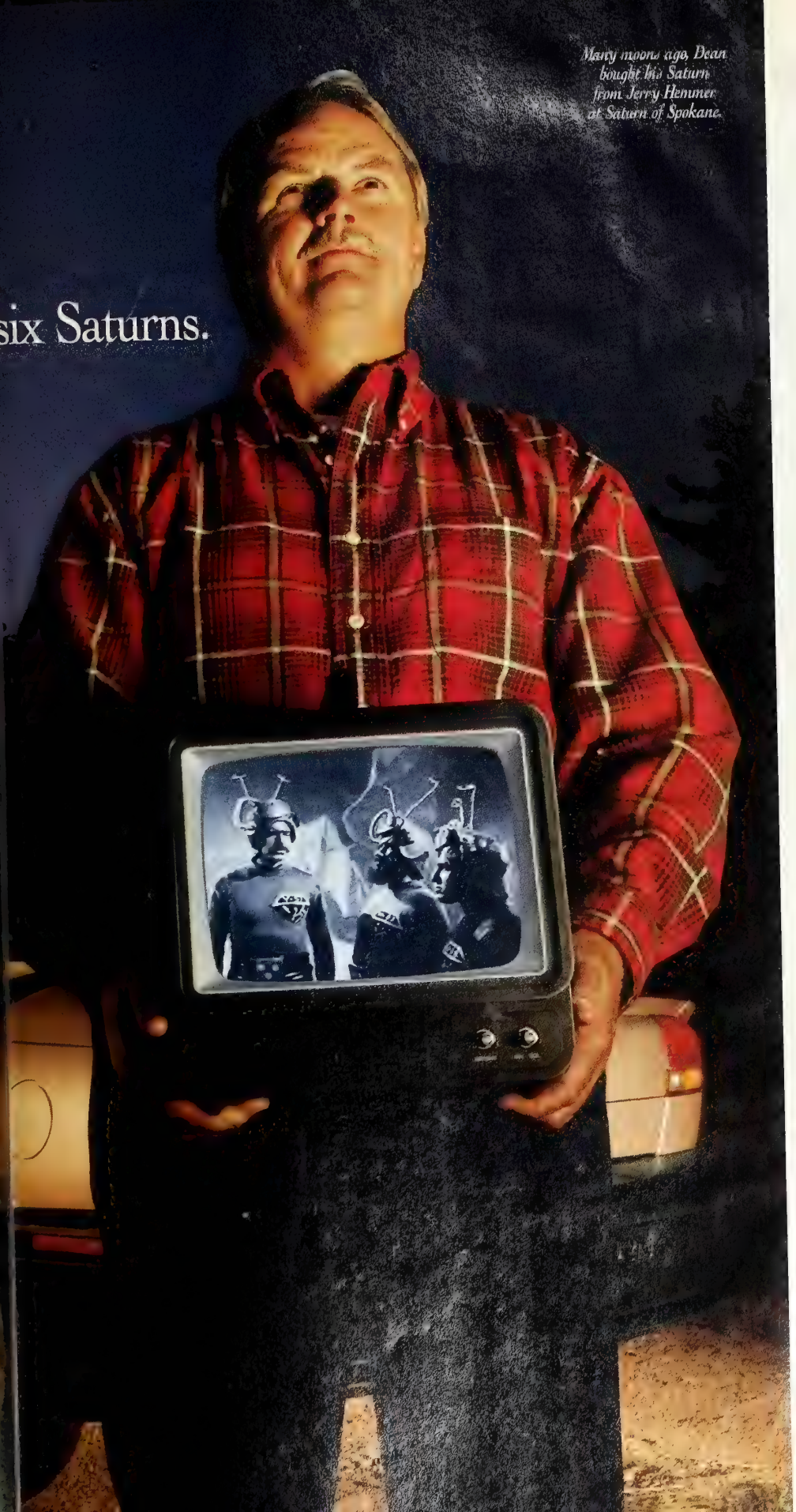
See, Dean and his Saturn average about 250 miles a day, 75,000 miles a year. And when we last caught up with them, they'd done about 165,000 miles.

By the time he gets to where he's going, his customers are amazed at how he got there. So as he takes out his collapsible satellite dish, he shows off his Saturn. Not surprisingly, in the last couple years, Dean's sold 2,034 satellite dishes... and six Saturns.

Of course, Dean says he's going for 300,000 miles. And who knows where he'll be selling Saturns by then.



Dean Koontz is pictured with a 1995 Saturn SL1. M.S.R.P. for the 1995 Saturn SL1 is $[illegible] at participating retailer [illegible]. Transportation and options are extra. For more information on Saturn cars please call us at [illegible] 1-800-522-5000.



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Puzzle 80 *Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli*

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LETTERS

Life With Down Syndrome

I was disappointed that Michael Bérubé's excellent essay on being the parent of a child with Down syndrome ["Life As We Know It," December 1994] drags out the old scapegoat for prejudice, the English language. His own insightful observations refute clichés about "the power of mere language," and show that whereas there may be intimate links between words and social practices, the main causal arrow goes from practice to language rather than vice versa.

Bérubé notes that although "retarded" and "delayed" are synonyms, neither with any literal pejorative sense, the former (and older) word has become an epithet. Exactly so: any unpleasant or emotionally charged concept will soon taint the word that denotes it, calling for a "polite" replacement. Unfortunately, the replacement does not cleanse the concept, but rather becomes tainted itself.

The point is that words don't fall out of the sky like meteorites. A person has to first coin a word or use it in a new sense, and this sense has to catch on within a community. The inspiration for the coinage depends on certain attitudes, as does the subsequent contagion. For an epithet like "idiot," meaning "contemptibly foolish," to have been co-opted as a medical term, or for a medical term like "moron" to become an epithet, a large number of English speakers to be contemptuous of retarded ple. Nowadays, it is inconceiv that "Down's," too, could becom insult meaning "asinine," becaus decent, educated adult would n the connection.

Bérubé rightly objects to b with "outdated information, ignc generalizations, and pictures of ple in mental institutions, face d in their feeding trays." But what this have to do with "words phrases" being the "devices by w we beings signify what . . . Down drome . . . will mean"? The prol with the books is not with t choice of words and phrases; problem is that the *content* of language is outdated and ignor Saying that "developmentally layed people cannot lead meanir lives" would be every bit as ignc and harmful as saying it of "reta people" or "mongoloid idiots."

I take the point of Bérubé's to be that there is a greater ran functioning among Down syndr children than most people think that, for both ethical and prac reasons, every Down's child oug be treated as if he or she were ir upper part of this range. Focusin words and phrases is misspent gy. Once the message gets out language will change accordingly

Steven Pinker
Director, Center for Cognitive Neuroscience
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Mass.

As two sets of parents of chil with Down syndrome born ir

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

y 1970s, we remember with
:e clarity (and considerable
) the gloomy prognoses handed
n by various "professionals" at
time. "Institutionalize your son
ediately, before a bond is estab-
ed," said one of our obstetri-
s. "He will never walk or talk,
or write, or have a single mean-
ul thought. Put him away and
your friends and family that he
in childbirth."
took all of our strength to make
then radical decision to disre-
professional advice and take
sons home. And we discovered,
Aichael Bérubé reported, that
first few years of early-interven-
programs (very new and experi-
tal in those days) kicked off a
od—and climate—of growth, ed-
ion, and development that con-
es to this day.
/hat we have learned in the past
nty-odd years is that individuals
have Down syndrome are just
: individuals. They have the
e hopes, dreams, goals, and feel-
as anybody else. Like those who
not have Down syndrome, they
e a tremendously wide range of
rests, opinions, and abilities. Our
sons, Jason (now twenty), and
chell (now twenty-three) are as
rent from each other as can be.
)ur boys have proved the profes-
als wrong on countless occasions.
only did they learn to read and
e but they flourished in both spe-
and regular education, culminat-
with their graduation from high
ool and, in Mitchell's case, fully
pendent living. Their most re-
achievement has been the writ-
and publication of a book—*Count
In: Growing Up With Down Syn-
ne* (Harcourt Brace, 1994). This
lmark volume yields insights into
innermost thoughts of individuals
developmental disabilities.
)ne of Jason and Mitchell's most
ressive attributes is their deep
se of "mission," their fervent
mitment to eradicating the neg-
e stereotypes and misconceptions
continue to surround Down syn-
me. Through speeches and radio,
vision, and newspaper inter-
ws, they have been carrying a
eful message to the world: full
entitlement for individuals with disabilities. These two young men, once written off by the "experts," have, in fact, *become* the experts and have made the world a better place.

Emily Perl Kingsley
Charles R. Kingsley
Chappaqua, N.Y.

Barbara Levitz
Jack Levitz
Peekskill, N.Y.

Last December, after a member of our family gave birth, prematurely, to a son who has both Down syndrome and other severe physical complications, we passed around Michael Bérubé's essay to read. Each of us found a quiet corner by ourselves to take in each word and study every photograph of Bérubé's son James.

Like James, Aidon was placed in an intensive-care unit immediately after his birth, connected to several IVs, monitors, oxygen, and machines. His mother and father sat by him for much of the day, returning home at night, exhausted, to their other child, a two-year-old confused by the break in routine.

The multitude of doctors, giving what often seemed to be conflicting diagnoses and suggestions, so far have been unable to tell us how long we will have with Aidon. But what is most important is the way each member of the family has been touched by the birth of this child.

We have all learned that Down's is the least of our worries. The physical complications (both related and unrelated to Down's) have carried us through a range of emotions. Thankfully, the child is in no pain; the pain is in *us* as we imagine life without him at home. Each of us relates to Bérubé's observation that "there are days . . . I catch myself believing that people with Down's are here for a specific purpose." And we think, "Not one, but many."

Vivian Norris-Schwinn
Seattle

Darkening Skies Over California

Peter Schrag's essay "California's Elected Anarchy" [November 1994]

THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF WHITEWATER

A symposium sponsored by Harper's Magazine

National Press Club, October 25, 1994

In the October 1994 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Gene Lyons's article "Fool for Scandal: How the *New York Times* Got Whitewater Wrong" examined the *New York Times*'s Whitewater reporting, which began with a March 8, 1992, story by Jeff Gerth. Lyons revealed a pattern of selective reporting, inaccuracies, fact suppression, and misleading innuendo in the *Times*'s coverage of the Whitewater affair.

Lyons and other prominent journalists debated the issues raised by Lyons's piece in a *Harper's*-sponsored symposium held at the National Press Club on October 25, 1994. The *Times* declined to send a representative.

Participants:

Lewis H. Lapham (Moderator)
Harper's Magazine

Gene Lyons
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Stan Crock
Business Week

Tom Hamburger
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

John Camp
CNN

Trudy Lieberman
Columbia Journalism Review

Brian Duffy
U.S. News & World Report

Jeff Birnbaum
Wall Street Journal

Symposium transcript, $10; Whitewater issue, $6.50 (U.S.).
Send orders to: *Harper's Magazine*, Dept. Whitewater, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

is excellent. In asking how a state government could be destroyed by popular referendum, one must ultimately return to the fact that those elected to govern *failed* to govern.

At a time when various public programs were being initiated and enhanced, the easiest source of tax dollars, the property tax, was the one most heavily exploited. Because those elected to govern failed to heed the grievance of the citizenry and, in fact, refused to view real property as anything but a cash cow, the body politic chose another alternative: government by referendum. As a result, every citizen of California is now tyrannized by a majority that existed for a single day in 1978.

Harold M. Isbell
San Francisco

Peter Schrag's analysis is remarkable in its depth and scope, but even more remarkable is the absence of any mention of the biggest players in the California political scene in recent years, land developers and real estate speculators. After World War II, and particularly after the Korean War, these people fueled an explosion in California real estate development, and many of them amassed great fortunes in the process. It was this growth that affected life and politics in the state far more than any of the persons or forces Schrag mentions.

Developers found that they could move into small, largely agricultural towns and buy land very cheaply. And they met with little opposition, because the city councils and chambers of commerce were easily sold on the benefits of expansion through the popular myth that population growth was needed for economic growth. The results were very successful in many places. The city where I live, for example, had a population of 7,000 in 1953 and it now has 115,000.

These boom cycles were punctuated by occasional downturns in the economy that caused some residents to take a long hard look at the price of growth. In most towns, the former economic bases were pushed out. Developers were willing to pay much more per acre than farmers or ranchers, so agricultural operations shut down and the land was sold for development. The economic base of many towns became growth itself—the building industry and all of its suppliers and workers. That is when growth as an industry became a sort of Ponzi scheme feeding on itself. This was the first economic reality.

The second was that massive hidden subsidies made growth immensely profitable. Doubling in size requires a duplication of each element in a town's infrastructure, and with such cancerous growth rates, it often was necessary to duplicate everything in as little as five years. This was generally done by raising taxes and passing bond issues.

This would not have been a problem if growth had improved the overall quality of life. But the once rural atmosphere that had attracted the first wave of newcomers was replaced by crowded schools, water shortages, and, worst of all, the loss of a sense of *community*. The developers, to ensure a continued cash flow, supported politicians friendly to rapid development, and the residents of the town lost control of their destiny.

By the mid-1970s, taxes to subsidize growth had risen to unprecedented heights, and the existing residents simply got tired of paying for more people, more crowding, and more dirty air. This dynamic paved the way for Proposition 13 (the constitutional amendment approved by California voters in 1978 that sharply reduced local property taxes). The initiative was badly drafted, but it promised an end to the cycle that was driving people out of their homes.

Schrag seems to suggest that it is unfair for neighbors to have differing property taxes, a situation created by Proposition 13. If I paid $100,000 for my house and my neighbor paid $200,000, why should our taxes be the same? Schrag would probably be quick to tell me that my house is now worth double what I paid for it, but I won't realize any of that gain until I sell it, and it is entirely possible that it won't be worth as much at that time.

To his credit, Schrag is right t California's initiative process been used by many special intere And although some special inter may misuse the initiative, other s cial interests want it abolished, si it is a tool that the common citi has occasionally used to his or own benefit at the local level.

Nowadays, all politics seems to volve catering to special inter with big money. Initiatives get proved because the legislature fail respond to a perceived public ne In order to get the votes, the org zation behind an initiative has to pear, at least, to be responding that need, even if what they int to sell is only snake oil. Thus the tiative offers a tiny ray of hope to ordinary person that politics is completely out of control.

Niel Lynch
Escondido, Calif.

Mining Truth

Andy Yale makes several imp tant points about the crisis fac U.S. coal-field communities in article "The Closing of the Am can Mine" [December 1994]. U fortunately, Yale seems less inter ed in those issues than in s cessfully portraying coal miner pitiable, beer-swilling, semilite oafs: the noble savages of postin trial America.

As a member of the United M Workers staff, I was especially in ested to read one of Yale's sour one Dewey Cox (someone he s he met in a tavern), claim t union president Richard Trun "ain't no miner."

Had Yale phoned the union, would have discovered that Trun "ain't" only a third-generation miner from Nemacolin, Pennsy nia but also one of only a handfu national union presidents elec directly by the rank and file Yale's "sources" represent the thi ing of most union members, t someone forgot to tell the 78 cent who reelected Trumka t third term.

Had Yale's research gone furt than simply sucking down a brews with some miners, he

ıt have discovered that the se-
ive strike strategy he con-
ns—an approach in which work-
strike only operations where
pages have the greatest impact—
› effective that several other
›ns are using this approach as
. While I admit that our strategy
not satisfy Yale's hunger for a
s uprising by the proletariat, it
succeeded in keeping the wages
benefits earned by a UMWA
miner the best of any blue-collar
ker in America.

Grossfeld
ctor of Communications
ted Mine Workers of America
shington, D.C.

thing Comes of Nothing

m Holt, in his essay "Nothing
ıtured" [November 1994], mixed
heady ontological martini so dry
he omitted the whisper of lin-
tic vermouth altogether. Every
ıker of English vernacular knows
that there is a complicated relationship between nothings: "nothing" as shorthand for "nothing in particular," "nothing" denoting a singular positive concept, and the same single word used in a negative sense to indicate absence, to mean "no thing." Common English usage instinctively incorporates, mostly in rhetorical ways, the paradoxes and absurdities Holt points out. Think about "Nothing" as the answer to any number of ordinary questions—"What can I do to help?" "What do you feel like doing tonight?" "What's in that box?"—and you'll realize that we make these jokes all the time. We even have a television comedy, *Seinfeld*, purported to be about nothing.

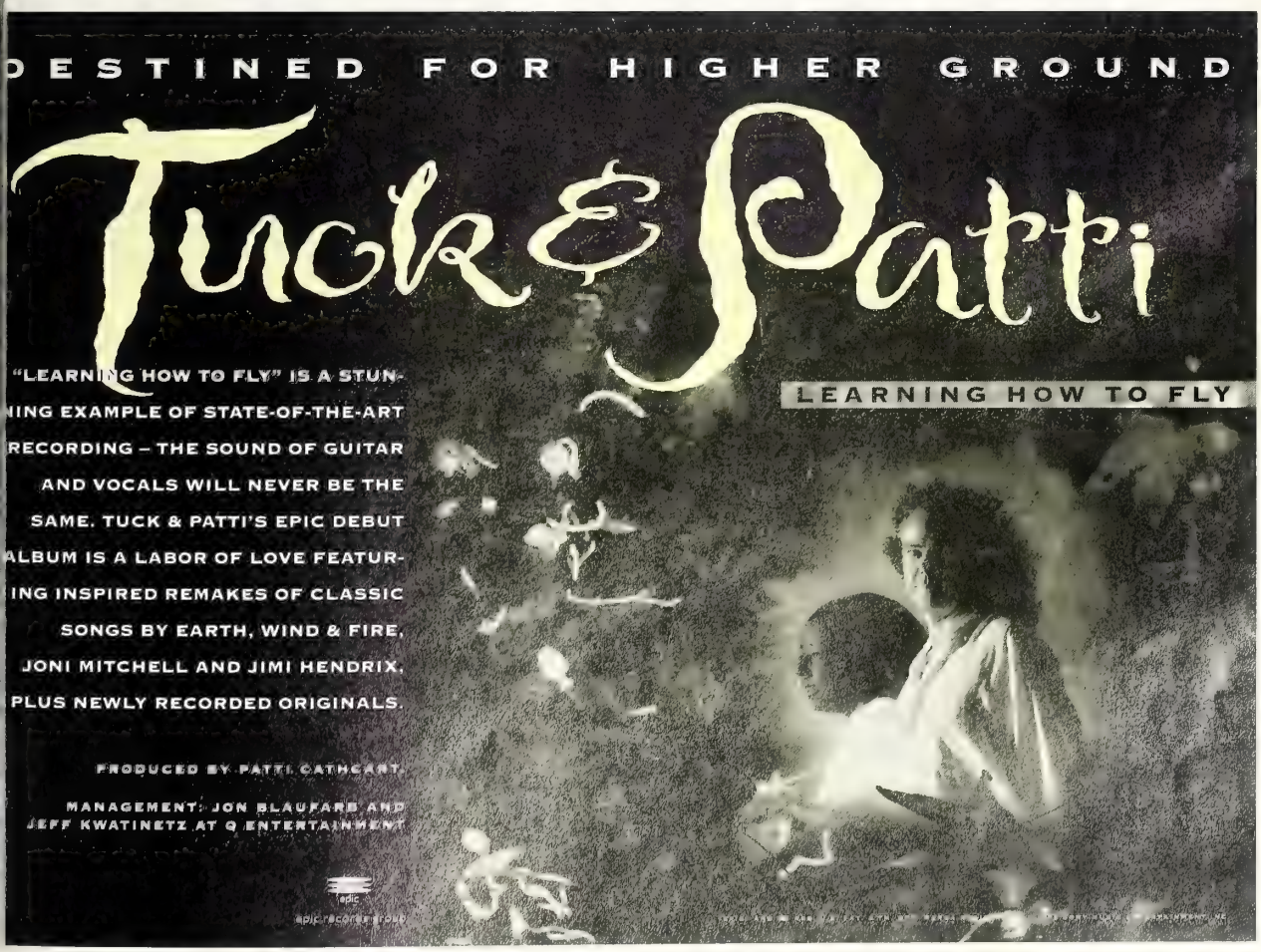
And how can someone writing in part about English usage, someone who recognizes Shakespeare as well as A. J. Ayer, fail to note that Wallace Stevens, in 1921, distinguished between "nothing that is not there and the nothing that is"? Holt may be cheered by the fact that, as W. H. Auden put it, "poetry makes nothing happen." Poets have always been willing to deal with nothing on our behalf, even if it is only to say tentatively, with Robert Frost, "For once, then, something."

"Nothing" is an important word that has been treated subtly by the English-language literature of the imagination, as well as by common speakers. Do we want to hand it over to physics and philosophy and theology? Nothing doing!

Susan Lasher
New York City

Unfortunately, Jim Holt's article on ontology omits the observation of the profound contemporary philosopher Billy Preston, who wrote, "Nothing from nothing gets nothing/Gotta have something if you wanna dance with me!"

Tom Whiting
El Granada, Calif.




MOCKBA
NEW YORK
genuine
Russian vodka
STOLICHNAYA
Stolichnaya
vodka
FREEDOM
OF VODKA
NEXT

HARPER'S INDEX

Average amount an American taxpayer spent on welfare last year : $26

Amount by which the weekly pay of a full-time minimum-wage worker exceeds the poverty level : $25

erage amount of his Social Security and Medicare taxes a single 30-year-old man will never receive in benefits : $37,200

Average amount in excess of his Social Security and Medicare taxes a single 65-year-old man will receive : $35,200

io of American adults under 35 who believe Social Security will exist when they retire to those who believe in UFOs : 3:5

nount the federal government will spend this year on "Star Wars," now called Ballistic Missile Defense : $2,800,000,000

Percentage of Russians who say they would prefer the government of Leonid Brezhnev to that of Boris Yeltsin : 46

Percentage of Americans who favor returning to "President Reagan's economic policies of the 1980s" : 37

Percentage of all sitting federal judges who were appointed by a Republican president : 60

mount by which the average salary of a Republican House staffer last year exceeded that of a Democratic staffer : $871

Chances that a black House staffer worked for a Republican last year : 1 in 11

Chances that a professional athlete in the United States is black : 1 in 10

Ratio of the number of black teenagers citing violence as their school's biggest problem to those citing racism : 6:1

Ratio among white teenagers : 2:1

Percentage of American teenagers who cite "not being in love" as the best reason not to have sex : 4

Percentage who cite the risk of contracting AIDS : 60

Price of a blood-proof Emergency Medical Services jacket from Anna Sui, a New York City boutique : $210

Number of the ten biggest-grossing movies of all time that contain at least one explosion : 6

Number of Avis rental cars in Miami equipped with an Emergency Police Alert button : 500

Ratio of U.S. auto exports to Mexico last year to Mexican auto exports to the U.S. : 1:7

Chances that an immigrant to the U.S. with a high school diploma has a doctorate : 1 in 200

Chances that a native-born American with a high school diploma has a doctorate : 1 in 1,000

Percentage of Americans who believe that every holder of a Ph.D. has attended medical school : 41

Estimated number of DNA tests conducted in the United States last year : 145,000

Length, in pages, of the Federal Judicial Center's new science primer for federal judges : 637

umber of Evergreen State College students enrolled in a yearlong program composed of courses based on *Star Trek* : 52

Chances that an American adult under 35 has eaten pizza for breakfast : 3 in 4

Chances that an American over 55 has : 1 in 4

Percentage change in the last year in the average price of a hog : –30

Percentage change in the retail price of pork : –3

Minimum price of a competition-level koi, a Japanese show carp, from Konishi Koi Farm in Hiroshima : $100,000

Percentage change since 1950 in the average life span of an American chicken raised for slaughter : –67

Number of people who attended the return of the buzzards to Hinckley, Ohio, on Buzzard's Sunday last March : 5,000

ık of Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg, a Massachusetts lake, among the longest U.S. place names : 1

nk for which the words "town" and "priest" are tied, among the oldest English words cited in the Oxford English Dictionary : 1

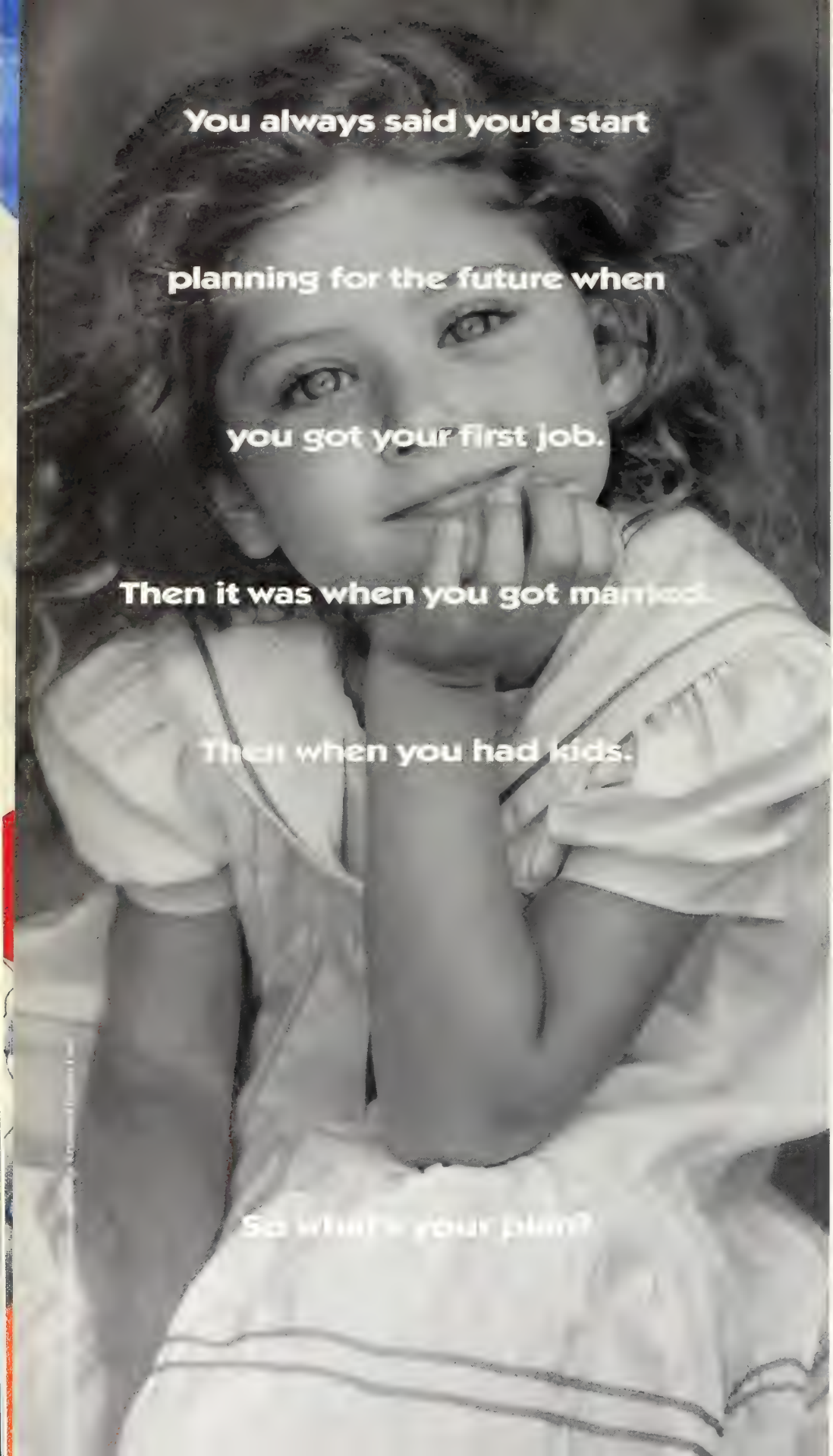
Percentage of non-Christian Americans who say they believe in the resurrection of Christ : 52

mount for which a Mississippi man attempted to sue "the Bible" last year, citing it as "oppressive hearsay" : $45,000,000

umber of years McDonald's has been suing 2 unemployed Britons for distributing pamphlets calling its food "unhealthy" : 4

Number of hamburgers thrown at a man attempting to rob an Oklahoma City McDonald's last July before he fled : 1

Figures cited are the latest available as of January 1995. Sources are listed on page 76.
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READINGS

[Address]

LISTENING TO BOREDOM

Adapted from "In Praise of Boredom," by Joseph Brodsky, in On Grief and Reason, *a collection of his essays and speeches to be published this summer by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Brodsky won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1987. "In Praise of Boredom" was originally delivered as a commencement address at Dartmouth College.*

A substantial part of what lies ahead of you is going to be claimed by boredom. The reason I'd like to talk to you about it today, on this lofty occasion, is that I believe no liberal arts college prepares you for that eventuality. Neither the humanities nor science offers courses in boredom. At best, they may acquaint you with the sensation by incurring it. But what is a casual contact to an incurable malaise? The worst monotonous drone coming from a lectern or the most eye-splitting textbook written in turgid English is nothing in comparison to the psychological Sahara that starts right in your bedroom and spurns the horizon.

Known under several aliases—anguish, ennui, tedium, the doldrums, humdrum, the blahs, apathy, listlessness, stolidity, lethargy, languor, etc.—boredom is a complex phenomenon and by and large a product of repetition. It would seem, then, that the best remedy against it would be constant inventiveness and originality. That is what you, young and newfangled, would hope for. Alas, life won't supply you with that option, for life's main medium is precisely repetition.

One may argue, of course, that repeated attempts at originality and inventiveness are the vehicle of progress and, in the same breath, civilization. As benefits of hindsight go, however, this one is not the most valuable. For if we divide the history of our species by scientific discoveries, not to mention new ethical concepts, the result will not be very impressive. We'll get, technically speaking, centuries of boredom. The very notion of originality or innovation spells out the monotony of standard reality, of life.

The other trouble with originality and inventiveness is that they literally pay off. Provided that you are capable of either, you will become well-off rather fast. Desirable as that may be, most of you know firsthand that nobody is as bored as the rich, for money buys time, and time is repetitive. Assuming that you are not heading for poverty, one can expect your being hit by boredom as soon as the first tools of self-gratification become available to you. Thanks to modern technology, those tools are as numerous as boredom's symptoms. In light of their function—to render you oblivious to the redundancy of time—their abundance is revealing.

As for poverty, boredom is the most brutal part of its misery, and escape from it takes more radical forms: violent rebellion or drug addiction. Both are temporary, for the misery of poverty is infinite; both, because of that infinity, are costly. In general, a man shooting heroin into his vein does so largely for the same reason you rent a video: to dodge the re-



"Spring (Grace)" and "Clara," from a series of photograms by Martha Madigan. Madigan uses a special photographic paper known as "printing-out paper," which develops images immediately upon contact with light. She begins by laying her subjects—in the photos above, her children—on a sheet of the paper and exposing it to sunlight. She arranges leaves on the resulting silhouette and reexposes the paper. She then adds another layer of leaves and photographs the new image. Human Nature, *an exhibition of Madigan's work, was on display last fall at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery in New York City.*

dundancy of time. The difference, though, is that he spends more than he's got, and that his means of escaping become as redundant as what he is escaping from faster than yours. On the whole, the difference in tactility between a syringe's needle and a stereo's push button roughly corresponds to the difference between the acuteness of time's impact upon the have-nots and the dullness of its impact on the haves. But, whether rich or poor, you will inevitably be afflicted by monotony. Potential haves, you'll be bored with your work, your friends, your spouses, your lovers, the view from your window, the furniture or wallpaper in your room, your thoughts, yourselves. Accordingly, you'll try to devise ways of escape. Apart from the self-gratifying gadgets I mentioned before, you may take up changing your job, residence, company, country, climate; you may take up promiscuity, alcohol, travel, cooking lessons, drugs, psychoanalysis.

In fact, you may lump all these together, and for a while that may work. Until the day, of course, when you wake up in your bedroom amidst a new family and a different wallpaper, in a different state and climate, with a heap of bills from your travel agent and your shrink, yet with the same stale feeling toward the light of day pouring through your window. You'll put on your loafers only to discover that they're lacking bootstraps by which to lift yourself up from what you recognize. Depending on your temperament and your age, you will either panic or resign yourself to the familiarity of the sensation, or else you'll go through the rigmarole of change once more. Neurosis and depression will enter your lexicon; pills, your medicine cabinet.

Basically, there is nothing wrong with turning life into the constant quest for alternatives, into leapfrogging jobs, spouses, and surroundings, provided that you can afford the alimony and jumbled memories. This predicament, after all, has been sufficiently glamorized on-screen and in Romantic poetry. The rub, however, is that before long this quest turns into a full-time occupation, with your need for an alternative coming to match a drug addict's daily fix.

There is yet another way out of boredom, however. Not a better one, perhaps, from your

point of view, and not necessarily secure, but straight and inexpensive. When hit by boredom, let yourself be crushed by it; submerge, hit bottom. In general, with things unpleasant, the rule is: The sooner you hit bottom, the faster you surface. The idea here is to exact a full look at the worst. The reason boredom deserves such scrutiny is that it represents pure, undiluted time in all its repetitive, redundant, monotonous splendor.

Boredom is your window on the properties of time that one tends to ignore to the likely peril of one's mental equilibrium. It is your window on time's infinity. Once this window opens, don't try to shut it; on the contrary, throw it wide open. For boredom speaks the language of time, and it teaches you the most valuable lesson of your life: the lesson of your utter insignificance. It is valuable to you, as well as to those you are to rub shoulders with. "You are finite," time tells you in the voice of boredom, "and whatever you do is, from my point of view, futile." As music to your ears, this, of course, may not count; yet the sense of futility, of the limited significance of even your best, most ardent actions, is better than the illusion of their consequences and the attendant self-aggrandizement.

For boredom is an invasion of time into your set of values. It puts your existence into its proper perspective, the net result of which is precision and humility. The former, it must be noted, breeds the latter. The more you learn about your own size, the more humble and the more compassionate you become to your likes, to the dust aswirl in a sunbeam or already immobile atop your table.

If it takes will-paralyzing boredom to bring your insignificance home, then hail the boredom. You are insignificant because you are finite. Yet infinity is not terribly lively, not terribly emotional. Your boredom, at least, tells you that much. And the more finite a thing is, the more it is charged with life, emotions, joy, fears, compassion.

What's good about boredom, about anguish and the sense of meaninglessness of your own, of everything else's existence, is that it is not a deception. Try to embrace, or let yourself be embraced by, boredom and anguish, which are larger than you anyhow. No doubt you'll find that bosom smothering, yet try to endure it as long as you can, and then some more. Above all, don't think you've goofed somewhere along the line, don't try to retrace your steps to correct the error. No, as W. H. Auden said, "Believe your pain." This awful bear hug is no mistake. Nothing that disturbs you ever is.

[Pointers]

IT'S THE ACCESSORIES, STUPID

From a fashion guide distributed last December at a seminar given by the Congressional Spouses Association as part of a two-day orientation for the husbands and wives of newly elected senators and representatives. The seminar was led by Patricia McKeon, wife of Representative Howard McKeon (R., Calif.).

FOURTEEN POINTS TO PERFECT ACCESSORIES

You should try for a total of fourteen points. If you score under fourteen, you may need to add something; if you score over, you may have too much on. This is just for fun but is also a helpful guide.

1 point for plain leather pumps
2 points for suede pumps, two-tone pumps, or shoes with buckles or ornaments

1 point for sheer stockings
2 points for colored, patterned, or opaque stockings

1 point for classic, straight, or A-line skirt
2 points for patterned, pleated, or textured skirt

1 point for classic blouse
2 points for patterned or textured blouse

1 point for classic plain jacket
2 points for patterned or textured jacket

1 point for plain scarf
2 points for patterned scarf

1 point for classic handbag
2 points for handbag with chains or other flashy adornments

1 point for glasses
2 points for fashion sunglasses

1 point for classic hat
2 points for any other hat

Also, add one point for nail polish, one point for makeup, and one point for each piece of jewelry.

Good luck. If you have questions, don't hesitate to call me.

Patricia McKeon

[Dossier]

ETHNIC CLEANSING: A WHO'S WHO

From the "Report on Who's Who in Former Yugoslavia," a confidential dossier prepared last June by the United Nations Protection Force in Zagreb, Croatia. The report includes biographical information on several hundred "military and civilian personalities"; Globus, a Zagreb newspaper, wrote that the dossier is "full of factual errors" and that it demonstrates the U.N.'s "disastrous lack of knowledge about the situation here." Zeljko Raznatović and Captain Dragan, the two Serbian militia leaders whose entries are excerpted below, are both known for having taken part in mass killings in the service of Bosnia's "ethnic cleansing"; the dossier does not mention this aspect of their role in the Balkan crisis. According to a U.N. spokesperson, the report is "simply an internal resource that is not meant to be a definitive biography of any of these people."

ZELJKO RAZNATOVIC ("Arkan"): Arkan is a forty-five-year-old Serb political leader close to the Serb Radical Party. He has no military rank. Before the wars with Croatia and Bosnia, he was famous in Belgrade as the owner of an ice cream parlor popular with the city's glitterati and underworld figures. He founded a fanatically loyal fan club for the Red Star soccer team. During the fighting, he was a paramilitary commander whose fighters—many recruited from among his fellow soccer fans—often outperformed the regular army on the battlefield.

One source reported that he is a brutal criminal wanted by Interpol for murder.

CAPTAIN DRAGAN (leader of Captain Dragan's Red Berets): Dragan is very outspoken, extremely clever, and quite Western in his manners and ways of thinking. He has a straightforward and practical personality. He speaks English with an accent that is somewhat Australian but more heavily South African. Although he claims to be a purely military person, he has shown an excellent capacity for political analysis and judgment.

Dragan has indicated that he has about one thousand men and women in training for his Alpha Special Forces. Many apply but only a few make it through, as the training is exceptionally tough. Since last July, Dragan's Alpha Special Forces have successfully carried out 114 commando operations against the Croatian Army. Dragan seems to enjoy maximum independence.

[Interview]

JUDGING FROM EXPERIENCE?

From an interview with Stephen W. Mansfield, a newly elected Republican judge on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, in the November 21, 1994, issue of Texas Lawyer. *Mansfield was elected despite charges that, during the campaign, he lied about his background and judicial experience. Mansfield is under investigation by the Texas attorney general's office; at issue is whether he meets state requirements for judicial office, such as having practiced law for a minimum of ten years. The interview was conducted by* Texas Lawyer *senior reporter Robert Elder Jr.*

ELDER: Given the points that [a recent *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*] editorial makes about your "shading the truth" in virtually every aspect of your career, do you deserve the chance [to sit on the Texas court]?

MANSFIELD: Well, certainly the people of Texas believe I did.

ELDER: Did they know what they were voting for?

MANSFIELD: Certainly the allegations against me are well publicized. They were in all the papers. All I can assume is people saw what happened and decided to give me a chance.

ELDER: You've said you lived in Houston for five or six years.

MANSFIELD: Five or six years, yes. When I was a little kid—two, three, four, around then.

ELDER: Two, three, four, to what age?

MANSFIELD: I honestly don't remember.

ELDER: Well, why did you move?

MANSFIELD: Well, you move with your parents. You do what they tell you.

ELDER: What part of town did you live in?

MANSFIELD: Kind of where I live now.

ELDER: If you never lived in Houston, just tell me now. Did you ever live in Houston before you moved there in the 1980s?

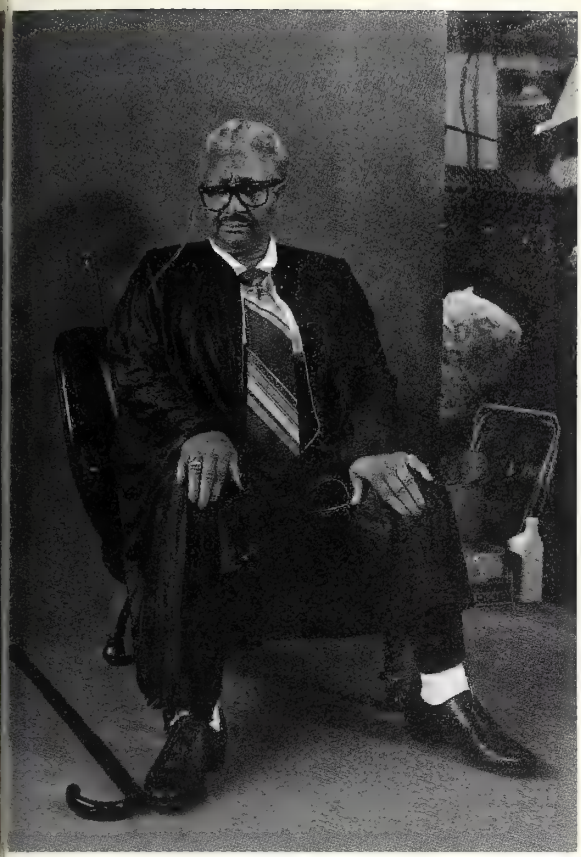
MANSFIELD: I retract it.

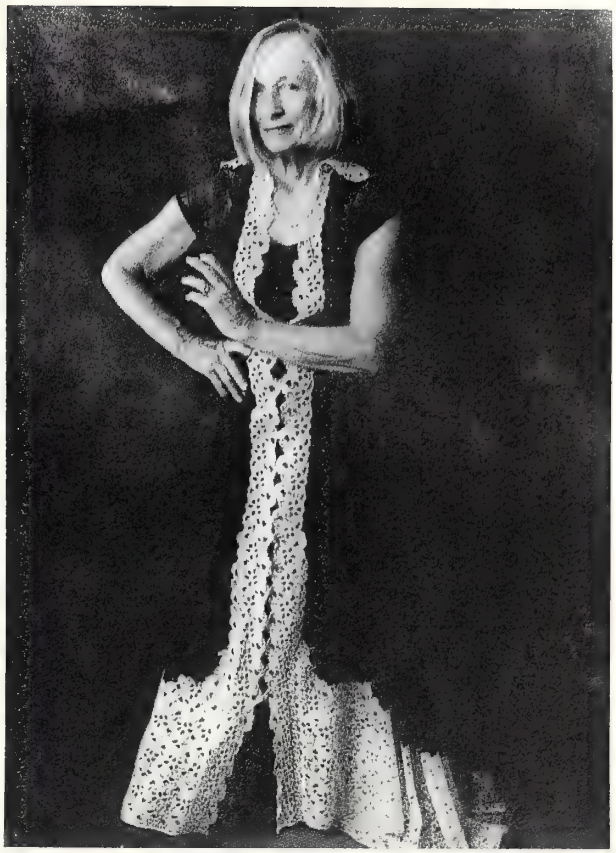
ELDER: Okay.

MANSFIELD: I never lived in Houston until the 1980s.

ELDER: All right, let me go back to a couple of points [that Mansfield discussed in a candidates' forum in October]. You said, "My background is primarily criminal defense." Given your employment history as listed in the Board of Law Examiners and what you've discussed previously, can you in good conscience say your background is primarily criminal defense?

MANSFIELD: I would have to retract that.





The photographs above, by Elise Mitchell Sanford, are part of The Stuff of Dreams, *an ongoing series of portraits by Sanford that feature "strong, mature women in fantasy roles." At left is "Margaret Killough as Thurgood Marshall"; at right is "Anne Clark Culbert as Veronica Lake." Sanford's photographs were on display in January at the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University.*

ELDER: Okay. How would you characterize it?

MANSFIELD: Well, certainly I have criminal defense experience, but certainly more of my practice has been in the area of federal tax law than in criminal defense.

ELDER: You also said you'd appeared in court in Illinois, Florida, and Massachusetts.

MANSFIELD: That's true.

ELDER: In what capacity?

MANSFIELD: Well, actually, Illinois, that's a mistake. It should have been Pennsylvania. I did appear in one case in Pennsylvania.

ELDER: Whatever. And so most of your criminal experience was in Massachusetts from 1978 to 1980.

MANSFIELD: Yes, I had several clients there I represented.

ELDER: Several.

MANSFIELD: And certainly in Florida—I appeared in court there. Once.

ELDER: In what capacity?

MANSFIELD: Well, I went to court with a friend there. Not as an attorney, though. As an adviser.

ELDER: So when you say you appeared in courts in Illinois—by which you now mean Pennsylvania—Florida, and Massachusetts, and in Florida you appeared not as an attorney but an adviser, isn't that what this editorial is talking about when it refers to your "shading the truth"?

MANSFIELD: Fine, fine, I'll acknowledge that.

ELDER: Aside from the few criminal law cases [that Mansfield argued] in 1994, did you do any criminal law work from the time you left Massachusetts in late 1980 until 1994?

MANSFIELD: No.

ELDER: Can you see how people get worried?

MANSFIELD: Sure, I have no problem with that. I understand that entirely.

ELDER: You'll be coming to the court probably with less experience than all the staff attorneys there and maybe a few of the briefing attorneys as well. How do you plan on working with the other judges and getting into the flow?

MANSFIELD: My background in team sports will help me there. Certainly I do realize as I go

[Strategy]

TAKING AIM AT THE YOUTH MARKET

From a gun-magazine article cited in "Use the Schools," a report issued last December by the Violence Policy Center, a Washington, D.C., educational foundation. The report criticized the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), an organization supported by gun manufacturers and dealers, for its efforts to promote interest in guns and shooting among schoolchildren. The article excerpted below, by Grits Gresham, the shooting editor of Sports Afield, *originally appeared in the September/October 1993 issue of* SHOT Business, *a magazine published by the NSSF.*

Customers. If you don't have them, you won't be in business very long. If you don't keep them, same thing. And if you don't have a supply of replacement customers coming along, the road ahead will begin to get rough.

There's a way to help ensure that new faces and pocketbooks will continue to patronize your business: use the schools. This is where most of your potential shooters and hunters are now.

Kids can't buy guns, you say? Well, yes and no. It's true that most kids from kindergarten through high school can't purchase firearms on their own. But it's also true that in many parts of the country youngsters (from preteens on up) are shooting and hunting. (Pop picks up the tab.) Whether they continue to shoot and hunt depends, to a great degree, on whether or not the desire is there. That's where you come in.

Schools can be a huge asset. They collect, in one place, a large number of minds and bodies that are important to your future well-being. What can you do to take advantage of this opportunity? Get to know the principals and coaches at schools in your area. Get them on your side. Impress upon them that you'd like to help with the education of children and teachers in the outdoor fields.

Consider sponsoring a youth shooting team in cooperation with your local shooting club or range. The gun club can provide instructors and range time, and most of them will. Building shooting interest among young people is the club's investment in the future, just as it is yours.

If you feel you aren't capable of public speaking, remember that compared with the students who will be your audience you are an authority on the subjects in question. You can do it.

in there that their first reaction is going to be "He has no business being here."

ELDER: How do you overcome the handicap of not having worked with the penal code? Is it fair to the other judges on the court, is it fair to the people in this state, to have someone come to the table who admittedly has a very sketchy depth of experience in this regard?

MANSFIELD: Well, I'll have my own crash course on this over the next several weeks. I believe I have the intelligence and ability to do the job.

ELDER: Do you see this as a long-term career for you?

MANSFIELD: As I campaigned around the state, one of the things I advocated was term limits for judges. Two terms. If I am fortunate enough to be elected [again], I will leave after the second term. Because, you know, I did give my word.

[Filibuster]

LAST WORDS (EXTENDED VERSION)

From the official transcript of the final statement of Raymond Kinnamon, a convicted murderer, given on December 11, 1994, just before Kinnamon was executed by lethal injection in a Texas prison. According to an Associated Press report of the event, Kinnamon's thirty-minute speech was an "apparent attempt to talk his way past the dawn execution deadline."

Warden, I would like to say a few words. I would like to say good-bye to my two boys in Indiana. I would like to tell them that I love them. I love all of my family members. I also want to thank Kent Ramsey, the warden, Mr. Nunnelee, etc. Sharon Longmier also treated me well.

Also thanks to my lawyers: Liz Cohen, Rob Owens, and Marsa Rutenbaum. I appreciate their hard work on my case. I love them all. Good-bye to Joey and all of my friends overseas, and I know there are a few more people I am missing.

I'm not trying to delay this; there are just so many people I want to remember. There are so many friends on death row that I can't mention them all. I have never seen so many people who do not want me to be executed. I also want to thank the radio stations. I want to thank my Aunt Pat and my brother, and I don't want him to let this bother his illness.



photograph above, by Catherine Henriette, was taken at a ceremony celebrating the opening of a new Kentucky d Chicken restaurant in Shanghai, China, last year. As part of the ceremony, 110 local schoolchildren performed ıe Colonel Sanders Chicken Dance." The restaurant is the company's twenty-eighth outlet in China and its nine ısandth worldwide. The photograph appeared in the November/December 1994 issue of Civilization, *a bimonth-ublished by the Library of Congress.*

And Carol and Ron: take care of the boys.

There are lots of friends on the row that I would like to say good-bye to. Vanderbilt, B.J., Carl Buntion. Carl isn't a very popular person on death row, because he killed a cop, but he's been a real good friend.

The warden wanted me to keep this short, but, shoot, this is my last chance. I want to thank Pete Gaylord for his support and help, and old Robert Valentine—he needs to take it easy. I appreciate all of the letters and everything. If I left anyone out, it's due to extenuating circumstances beyond my control.

I want to thank everyone back here with me. I don't see how nice guys like them got tied up in something like this. Thanks, Chaplain Taylor and Jane. Thanks to Carolyn and Gloria, who have been my friends for over four years. I want to remember Patsy Buntion, Gladys, and a lot more friends.

I want to thank the prosecutor in my case; it took courage to do what he did, but he did what he did because he believed in the judicial system.

I'm not ready to go, but I have no choice. I sent several letters to my family—they'll be very moving when you get them. I want to say good-bye again to my boys. I know I'm missing somebody.

[Manifesto]

NO MORE MR. WHITE GUY

From an editorial in the third issue of Race Traitor, *a journal published in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that "aims to serve as an intellectual center for [whites and others] seeking to abolish the white race."*

Two points define the position of *Race Traitor:* first, that the "white race" is not a natural but a historical category; second, that what has been historically constructed can be undone. The first of these points is now widely accepted: scientists have concluded that there are no biological standards for distinguishing one "race" from another, and social scientists have begun to examine how the concept of race was constructed and how it is reinforced. But few scholars or activists have taken the next logical step; indeed, one might say that up to now they have merely interpreted the white race. The point, however, is to abolish it. How can this be done?

The white race is like a private club that

grants privileges to certain people in return for obedience to its rules. The rules of the club do not require that all members be strong advocates of white supremacy, merely that they defer to the prejudices of others. Membership is based on one huge assumption: that all those who look white, whatever their complaints or reservations, are fundamentally loyal to the white race.

But what if white skin lost its usefulness as a badge of loyalty? What if the cop, the judge, the social worker, the schoolteacher, and the other representatives of official society could no longer recognize a loyal person merely by sight? How would this affect their behavior? And if color no longer served as a handy guide to the dispensing of favors—and ordinary whites began to experience the sort of treatment to which they are normally immune—how would this affect their outlook?

The way to abolish the white race is to disrupt the loyalty and conformity of the white club. If enough people who look white violate the rules of whiteness—and do it so flagrantly that they jeopardize their white standing—their existence will not be ignored. If it becomes impossible for the upholders of white rules to speak in the name of all who look white, then the white race will cease to exist.



From Isthmus, *a Madison, Wisconsin, weekly.*

How many will it take? No one can say for sure. It is a bit like the problem of currency: How much counterfeit money has to circulate in order to destroy the value of the official currency? Just enough to undermine public confidence in the official stuff.

We know how devilishly difficult it is for individuals to escape whiteness. The white race does not voluntarily surrender a single member, so even those who manage to step outside of it find it virtually impossible not to step back inside later, if only to validate the expectations of others. But we also know that when there comes into being a critical mass of people who, though they look white, have ceased to act white, then the white race will explode, and former whites will be able to take part, together with others, in building a new human community.

[Essay]

WEIGHING THE HUMAN INTEREST RATE

From "Taking the Measure of Economics," by Robert Heilbroner, in the Fall 1994 issue of Culturefront, *published by the New York Council for the Humanities. Heilbroner, an economist, is the author of* Visions of the Future, *published by Oxford University Press.*

Is economics a humanist discipline? The answer is yes, but for a reason I think many economists would reject. The reason is that economics, at its base, is inextricably connected with the exercise of social power, and power in all its forms and uses is inextricably connected with social values and moral judgments. I do not see how a discipline whose self-announced concern has always been the exploration of wealth can avoid the badge that other humanist disciplines—sociology, psychology, and philosophy, for instance—wear with pride.

Yet I suspect that if the question were put to the members of my profession there would be an embarrassed clearing of throats. Yes, of course economics is devoted to the subject of wealth. But one of the hallmarks of economics is that it does not pursue its subject from a "moralistic" point of view. Rather, it studies the problem of wealth objectively and dispassionately, the way a physical scientist studies the interaction of particles in a cloud of gas, applying the same methods regardless of whether the gas is expanding because the sun

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[Advertisement]

ALBANIA: THE NEXT PARADISE

From an advertisement in the December 10–11, 1994, edition of the International Herald Tribune, *promoting* How to Become Rich in Albania, *a self-published report by Dr. Gerhard Kurtz. According to the ad, Kurtz has written several books and reports, including* How to Avoid Taxes, How to Get a Second Passport, *and* How to Make Money. *Kurtz sells copies of* How to Become Rich in Albania *for $60.*

The once isolated country of Albania is now free and democratic. For men of action, this provides an exciting opportunity to get rich. In the process, you can enjoy the pleasures of Europe's last and least-known paradise.

In his new report, *How to Become Rich in Albania*, Dr. Gerhard Kurtz reveals the opportunities he's discovered in Albania during recent on-the-spot research into this inexpensive and unspoiled country:

- Albania is the poorest country in Europe, but you can live there like a king—even if you're now drawing welfare. Incomes in Albania average $35 a month, so your Western pennies immediately turn into gold nuggets. Suddenly, you can afford everything.
- Albania is one of the few countries left where you can lead a feudal lifestyle surrounded by undemanding domestic helpers.
- After a half century of being the most repressive country in the world, Albania is sparing no effort to become the world's freest country. Practically everything is allowed.
- Albanians are friendly and helpful (Mother Teresa is Albanian!), and they just love foreigners.
- Since Albania is too poor to have diplomatic representatives in all countries, any foreigner willing to pay for the upkeep of a consulate or embassy has a chance of being appointed consul or even ambassador.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture can offer you a restored noble title, which can be officially documented in your passport for no more than the cost of a mountain bike.

Find out more about the opportunities in Albania as soon as you can—before other people get there.

has come out or because it is part of a nuclear explosion. In the same way, economists study the processes by which wealth is generated and distributed, regardless of whether the end result is a poor society or a rich one, a society with a lopsided distribution of income or an egalitarian one.

But the myth of economists as nothing more than disinterested observers is a shaky one. Economics, especially the modern-day variety, is directly responsible for important aspects of the phenomena it studies.

Take the Federal Reserve Board's policy of fighting inflation by raising interest rates. All economists will tell you that the rates are raised to discourage businesspeople and prospective homeowners from borrowing. They will explain that this discouragement holds back growth in spending and is the only way to forestall the dangerous process of inflation.

This certainly seems to be a straightforward piece of economic analysis, quite devoid of any question of moral responsibility. Economists may disagree as to how great an increase in interest rates is required to achieve the anti-inflationary goal, and they may even argue whether inflation is, at any given moment, a real or an imagined menace. If we accept the Federal Reserve's estimates as made in good faith and with due care, then where is the moral responsibility of the economics profession?

The answer involves an aspect of the anti-inflation policy that we have not yet considered: that the Federal Reserve policy brings about the desired fall in spending because higher interest rates cause businesses to cut back expansion plans and families to forgo mortgages. Both of these effects result in fewer jobs—ordinarily cause for dismay, but in this case accepted with a small sigh of regret as the price one must pay to hold inflation at bay. What is also being held at bay are our moral values. For there is another, less unfair, means of controlling inflation: raising federal taxes, both personal and corporate, in order to reduce the level of household and business spending to whatever degree is needed.

Why is there a moral issue at stake in choosing between interest rates and taxes to combat inflation? The answer is that a boost in interest rates reduces spending by drastically cutting the incomes of the unfortunates who are "let go," whereas a broad-based tax hike diminishes spending because most individuals find their paychecks somewhat reduced. There will still be unemployment generated by an anti-inflation tax whose purpose is, like raising interest rates, to diminish spending, but to some degree all households

[Forecast]

THE WORK AHEAD

From The American Work Force: 1992–2005, *a bulletin of employment projections issued last year by the U.S. Department of Labor. The study found that nearly half of the jobs that the economy will gain over the next decade will be in three service industries—retail trade, health services, and educational services—and that most of the jobs lost will be in agriculture and manufacturing. The list on the left shows the professions that will experience the greatest growth over the next decade and the projected number of new jobs; the list on the right shows the professions that will experience the greatest decline and the projected number of jobs that will be lost.*

POSITIVE JOB GROWTH		NEGATIVE JOB GROWTH	
OCCUPATION	INCREASE (NO. OF JOBS)	OCCUPATION	DECREASE (NO. OF JOBS)
Retail salespersons	786,000	Farmers	-231,000
Registered nurses	765,000	Sewing-machine operators	-162,000
Cashiers	670,000	Cleaners/servants (domestic)	-157,000
General office clerks	654,000	Farmworkers	-133,000
Truck drivers	648,000	Typists and word processors	-125,000
Waiters and waitresses	637,000	Childcare workers (domestic)	-123,000
Nursing aides and orderlies	594,000	Computer operators	-104,000
Janitors and cleaners	548,000	Packaging machine operators	- 71,000
Food-preparation workers	524,000	Precision inspectors	- 65,000
Systems analysts	501,000	Switchboard operators	- 51,000
Home health aides	479,000	Telephone and cable-TV line installers and repairers	- 40,000
Secondary-school teachers	462,000		
Childcare workers (institutional)	450,000	Textile-machine operators	- 35,000
Security guards	408,000	Bartenders	- 32,000
Marketing/sales supervisors	407,000	Forming-machine operators	- 32,000
Teacher aides	381,000	Butchers and meat cutters	- 31,000
Top executives and managers	380,000	Bookkeeping-machine operators	- 28,000
General maintenance and repair workers	319,000	Central communications-equipment installers and repairers	- 25,000
Elementary-school teachers	311,000		
Gardeners and groundskeepers	311,000	Telephone operators	- 24,000
Fast-food counter workers	308,000	Bank tellers	- 24,000

will share in the cost, which is not the case when interest rates rise. By most moral standards, is that not the preferable course for a democracy to follow?

Then why is an anti-inflation tax not enthusiastically recommended by economists? Why does one, in fact, never hear of it as an alternative to Federal Reserve policy? The answer is that it would create too much political flak. This attitude may not be noble, but it is understandable: economists cannot expect individuals or businesses to acquiesce meekly to higher taxes just because the profession explains that this is a fairer way of heading off inflation than interest-rate hikes. But once more a moral issue intrudes—namely, that economists certainly can expect vehement protests *against* a tax policy if they themselves have never offered any explanation *in favor* of such a policy.

Of course, economics is humanist, in that the categories it establishes and the policy positions it espouses are unmistakably value-impregnated. The trouble is that the values embodied in many of these mainstream economic policies do not accord easily with those of a democratic society. How does economics find itself in such a situation?

One answer has to do with the evolution of

the doctrine. The earlier economists, from Smith to Marx, were acutely aware of the social—that is, the value-laden—character of the field. Contemporary economics has lost that penetrative and disturbing viewpoint, although heretics remain.

The second reason for the moral myopia of my profession is the seductive appeal of analysis for its own sake. Unlike politics, sociology, or psychology, economics offers the prospect of giving us a "scientific" explication of social movement. That appeal cannot be overestimated. A neophyte might be forgiven if, picking up one of the leading economics journals for the first time, he or she construed it to be about physics. Not incidentally, the term that one is least likely to encounter in skimming such economics journals is "capitalism." Economists feel more comfortable likening the object of their study to a "natural" system—the free market—than to a social system, such as capitalism.

Only when economists recognize, and regret, their isolation from the political aspects of economic society can economics again become what it once was: the self-conscious means by which a capitalist social order explains itself to itself.

[Contract Rider]

BEFORE THE BEAT GOES ON

The following illustration and list of stipulations are included in a rider to the contract sent to sponsors of "readings, workshops, and discussions featuring the poet Allen Ginsberg." Dennis Wills received the contract last May when Ginsberg agreed to read at the D.G. Wills bookstore in La Jolla, California.

The following will be provided by sponsor:

1. Plain chair with *flat seat* (not cushioned, not contoured, not molded, not sloped) and straight back for sitting forward on edge with spine upright.

2. A coffee table for books, manuscripts, tea, etc. It must be 2 ft. x 3 ft., or piano-bench size, and placed on Poet's right.

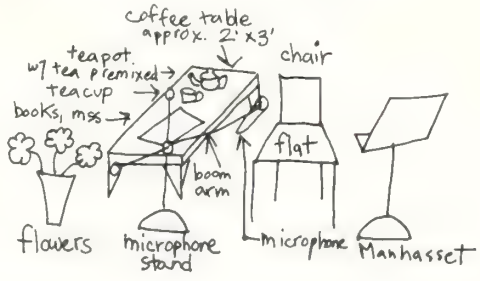
3. A sturdy music stand, like the Manhasset-brand noncollapsible type commonly used by orchestras.

4. Premixed chamomile tea in pot or thermos, and one empty cup. (*Premixed* to avoid mess on manuscripts and to save audience time.)

5. Modest vase of flowers—preferably wildflowers in season. Flowers, of course, can be pussy willows, or even dead dry branches, in accord with the time of the year. (*Don't* place on coffee table, which is for manuscripts and tea.)

6. House lights can be medium low but must be bright enough [for Ginsberg] to see and address audience's eyes.

7. Payment is due when services have been rendered. Please take adequate steps to have a check ready at the time of the reading.



[Found Poem]

SPORTS MELTDOWN

From "The Ultimate Sports Poem," a poetic collage "assembled" by Neal Pollack, a Chicago writer, "out of sentences culled from nearly a year's worth" of columns by Chicago Sun-Times *sportswriter Jay Mariotti. Pollack wrote that he compiled the poem to celebrate Mariotti's ability "to turn the perfect phrase." The poem appeared in the December 23, 1994,* Chicago Reader.

I

Money. Wooing. Money. Creativity. Money.
Do not tell me about sports and escapism.
We've been so damn spoiled in Chicago.
Flip flop. See saw. Teeter totter.
Real people, real stories.
You waited for tragic music, a curtain to fall.

II

Clouds of dust still hover over Comiskey Park.
They've installed little huts with curled roofs
where players can rest and dodge smoke
bombs.
As the Bulls fade into the afterworld of
champions, Frank Edward Thomas rises
majestically along the great skyline.
The kid is confused, stubborn, spoiled.
The fight for civil rights cuts through his
soul.
You wanted to throw your arms around the



e photograph above, of Tom Alberts, a Kendallville, Indiana, dollmaker, appeared in the December 12, 1994, issue of News-Sentinel *in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Alberts is shown with a collection of his Bobby Knight dolls, 29-inch repli- of the coach of the Indiana University Hoosiers, the team that Knight led to the NCAA basketball championship in 76 and 1981. The doll, which has a porcelain head, movable limbs, and miniature Converse sneakers, costs $545; so Alberts has sold 650 dolls. The photograph was taken by Keith Hitchens.*

kid, free him from the media madness.
As long as he hits home runs, he'll get the rousing cheers.
In a batting cage somewhere, Michael Jordan is jealous.
And a damned strike could louse it all up.

III

Fear. Horror. Helplessness.
Justice.
Along with Banks, that's your rotation, folks
The suds always flow, the vines always grow.
The fans always come to Wrigley.
Commitment to mediocrity, we'll call it.
Cry uncle, gentlemen.
Like Nixon in his final days, the embattled are usually found alone.
The something-something has spoken.

IV

How sad that we no longer can view sport as a fantasy, for all innocence is lost now.
This is probably the most bizarre, hideous, disturbing tale ever produced by life's sporting arena.
In the most hardened sense of real life, pathos everywhere, a young woman has been forced to confront the forces of evil.
Only in America could a beautiful sport degenerate into a sick sort of boxing sleaze.
So what we have here, at long last, is the potential apocalypse.
They have raped us of the sensation, the fun, the tradition, the aura.
Now corpses are being stored in what remains of the figure-skating hall.
The wounds are too deep and bloody, leaving unprecedented bitterness among fans.
Did some god ordain 1994 as the year of the great sports meltdown?
Day, night, sunrise, sunset—it all looks the same.
Nancy Kerrigan, save us from ourselves.



"Everts Township Homestead II," from a series of photographs of abandoned farms in Otter Tail County, Minnesota, by Max MacKenzie. MacKenzie, a Washington, D.C., architectural photographer, was born in Otter Tail County. This photograph on display last fall at the Julie Saul Gallery in New York City.

[Essay]

LOSING OURSELVES IN BIOGRAPHY

From "Biography and the Dissolving Self: A Note," by Sven Birkerts, in issue number 40 of AGNI, *a journal published at Boston University. Birkerts is the author, most recently, of* The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age; *an excerpt from the book appeared in the May 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

I have been afflicted with a single strikingly obvious thought about biography these past few months, and the time has come for me to unburden myself. The notion is this: that the great flowering of the biography genre that we have been witnessing over these past decades has been prompted by more than just a happy convergence of cultural and scholarly circumstances. That the public's growing fascination with the lives of the famous and notorious correlates directly with the steadily depreciating sense of subjective coherence many of us are feeling. That we turn to biography as compensation, to gather in vicariously what we are losing in the private sphere.

Before looking into this, I need to consider the dynamics of reading as they apply to biography. The nonprofessional reader picks up a given "life" for a number of different reasons, and the reading unfolds on several levels. There are the obvious motivations, chief among them human curiosity. We want to know about an important or beguiling figure, to know what made him or her tick. Along with this there is often a historical fascination. The reader seeks to get some purchase on a period through an immersion in the life of an individual. Following the path of Oscar Wilde or Edith Wharton or Orson Welles or Winston Churchill, we touch the pulse of a milieu, close in on a historical moment.

But there is a no less important incentive for reading the lives of others, and this is to illuminate to ourselves the facets of our own experience. Indeed, this impulse underlies a great deal of reading of all descriptions, but biography is especially rich in this regard. For whatever our ostensible reason for reading the life of Machiavelli or C. S. Lewis, it is inevitable that in the process we will formulate a particular sort of relation between our life and that of the subject. This is second nature. We can't help mapping our experiences alongside those of others. When a neighbor lays out her woes, we measure them against ours. We cannot scan an obituary without a quick crunching of the numbers.

Biography offers a heightened and sustained occasion for such calculations. We may be working through the life of a person with whom we appear to have little or nothing in common, but at every point we are comparing the pleasures and privations of X's childhood with those of our own; looking to see just how he tempered his youthful idealism and accommodated himself to his vocation; studying how love shaped him, or how he was affected by the deaths of his parents. When a reader compares his life with that of, say, Julius Caesar, he is establishing some sort of continuum between self and emperor. And it is along this continuum that the reader plots the points of their common humanity. Genius though Caesar may have been

at military strategy, unbridled as his ambitions may appear to have been, he was still, at the core, that recognizably scaled-down thing, a self. We base our reading on precisely this assumption. And the effect is, finally, as much to raise ourselves as it is to lower, or "humanize," the object of our veneration. We attend to the particulars of the life as we read, but in some essential way we read past the defining circumstances and situations to make contact with the common—that is to say, universal—subject.

Having set out this rudimentary premise, I can return to my original assertion: that now, more than in the past, we look to biography for something that we lack in our own lives. More and more we find ourselves living at a remove, with the feeling that life has gone blurry, has lost its singular intensity. We are unstuck by our mobility, detached from place. Our labor is less and less bound to primary societal needs; we give ourselves over to increasingly abstract operations. We feel our coherence dissipating among great troves of competing stimuli. We must register our cars, buy insurance, join health plans, pay taxes, whack away at mortgage debt, enter into the fiscal master-slave relation with credit-card companies. The days pass behind desks, behind counters, behind tinted glass, in front of terminals, waiting in lines, sitting in cars. In this kind of environment, it is harder and harder for any of us to hold a vivid and compelling idea of "my life." For the idea of a life—one's own life—must stand clear from the jumble of contingent circumstance. It must be coherent, significantly self-directed, charged with a sense of purpose and connectedness. We need to believe in our lives as destinies, as unfolding narratives that take on and manifest meaning. And this, I fear, is what we are losing. I have talked with so many people who have expressed the same basic sentiment: that they lack a defining sense of how they fit into the world. This is one of the chief complaints of our age. And this, to me, helps to account for the tremendous surge of interest in biography. Burrowing into a life, the reader experiences clarity and purpose by proxy. It is an exalting baptism.

For one thing, the circumstances of earlier times were, if not simpler, then more resonant; they seem to us more authentic. The vast systems of mediation had not yet fallen like a shadow over the globe. The world was a starker, more primary, more clearly defined place. There was more consensus—be it about social mores or public heroes—and perhaps, for most people, a deeper sense of cultural identification. Picking up hints of this as we read, we get a tonic sense of proportion. Things seemed to have density, weight—to matter.

But there is also, of course, the fundamental mode of presentation. Biographical narration itself is premised upon coherence and meaning. The biographer almost occupationally views his subject as living out a singular des-

[Appreciation]

BRETMANIA: THE NEXT GENERATION

From a letter to the editor by Janine Wilkins, of Watkins Glen, New York, in the October 1994 issue of Vanity Fair. *Wilkins was responding to a profile of novelist Bret Easton Ellis that appeared in the magazine's August issue.*

To say that I simply adore Bret Easton Ellis would be the biggest understatement I could ever make in my life. Mr. Ellis is a personal god to me. *Less Than Zero* made an indelible mark on my being. I have read it at least a hundred times. When the movie version came out I was shattered. I literally cried hysterically when I saw the travesty that took place on film.

To me, Bret Easton Ellis epitomizes truth. Mr. Ellis is a man who feels things so deeply and acutely that there can be no question in my mind that he is one of the most magnificent writers of all time. He is a literary genius who draws people into the worlds that he creates. No one leaves these worlds untouched.

When I was a college student in Vermont, I would drive down to the Bennington campus to pay homage to the man who had brought so much into my life. I felt that he understood me perfectly, and I hoped that he would be there so that I could thank him for his words. Being a twenty-one-year-old writer myself, I am still hoping to meet Mr. Ellis one day. But I hope to have better luck conversing with him than I did when I met Donna Tartt at a reading she gave. I was so in awe of the fact that she and Mr. Ellis were friends that I was struck mute when she spoke to me. Finally, I found my voice and gushed about how much I adored Mr. Ellis.

I hope to have better luck with Mr. Ellis one day. I will always carry a piece of him with me wherever I go.

tiny, with everything around him contributing to press his experience into its intended shape. Which of us feel a comparable sense of destination about our premillennial lives?

As biography gains in prestige, as there are more and more biographies and readers of biography, the terms of the opposition stand out in greater relief: while the subjects of the art loom larger and larger, their lives appearing more purposeful, or tragic, or grand, our own lives seem to be losing mass and dissolving into ever more nebulous bunches of pixels. The question goes to the biographers of the future: How will the lives of our present, which have lost the heft and distinctness that lives are supposed to have, get written? And, if written, who will want to read them?

[Events]

VIETNAM: WHAT I REMEMBER

From "Patriotism Revisited," by David W. Powell, a memoir submitted last October to a creative writing class at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Powell served as a marine in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967.

The following events come to my conscious memory uninvited. I not only remember them vividly, I reexperience them with all my senses:

Froze with fright, standing up, the first time I was under fire

Watched two marines try to break open the skull of a dead Viet Cong with a large rock

Observed a marine intentionally shoot a girl four or six years of age

Watched the girl's grandfather carry her into our line of fire, sobbing

Had a lieutenant who delighted in sneaking up on me when I was on watch at night

Was offered a blood-soaked flak jacket and a helmet with a bullet hole through it as my first field equipment

Had my boots rot off during an operation in the field

Observed two captured nurses being beaten and raped by marines

Rifle-butted a girl of twelve in the face when she would not move away

Strangled a captured Viet Cong for refusing to talk to an interpreter

Discovered brain matter on barbed wire I was stretching out

Observed a marine laugh as he stepped on the chest of a dead Viet Cong and watched blood squirt out of the enemy's wounds

Awoke to find a buffalo leech on my leg

Was abandoned under fire when a rocket jammed in my launcher

Was abandoned under fire when I was shot

Hit head and fell in open field. Watched my fellow marines run by me to seek cover for themselves

Received letter from wife telling me how much fun she and a girlfriend had on Friday nights when they went out to bars to dance

Watched fellow marine shoot himself in the foot to get evacuated

Heard same man cry in his sleep when he was returned to the company

Found marine boot with foot in it in a hedgerow

Almost run over by retreating U.S. tank

Saw Lt. Spivey hit a head-high booby trap

Nearly murdered villager for stealing my laundry

Watched Prestridge test his new M-16 by shooting a woman getting water from a nearby well

Identified Haas's remains

Exchanged letters with Haas's mother

Had an artillery canister fall six inches in front of my head

Was about to put on fresh boots when I discovered lice swimming in them

Saw seven-foot python climbing in ceiling just above my head

Bullets sounding like bees digging up ground all around me

Nearly trapped in Da Nang village my last night in Vietnam

Robbed by marines while I slept in Okinawa after tour was over

Circled over El Toro air base for two hours so that President Johnson could land and be photographed greeting returning veterans

•

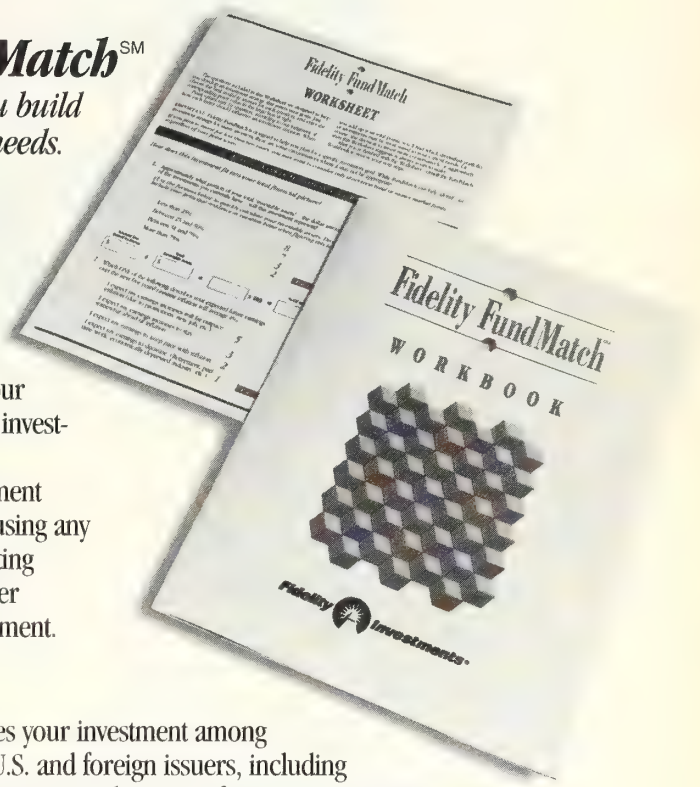
Since my return I have held eighteen different jobs and have been unemployed for several six-month periods. This is a direct result of my Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, specifically a disdain for being told to do tasks I do not want to do; an exaggerated startle response, which is terribly embarrassing to me; and a lack of control over emotional flooding.

I divorced my first wife two years after I got out of the service. I divorced my second wife in 1982. I separated from a four-year relationship in 1987. I have not had a significant relationship with a woman since then. I have no significant male or female friendships. I am aloof from my immediate family, who live in Tucson, Arizona.

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The stamps above were issued last year by the postal service of Abkhazia, a province in Georgia, the former Soviet republic. They are patterned after a sheet of stamps from the Communist era that featured Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin in a similar pose.

[Memoir]

THE CURRENCY OF DREAMS

From "The Psychology of Money," by James Buchan, in the Fall 1994 issue of Granta. *Buchan is the author of* The Golden Plough, *a novel to be published this spring by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. He lives in London.*

As a child and teenager, I had little to do with money. I was educated on scholarships and state handouts and the kindness of strange adults, and this money passed over my head. I started thinking seriously about money only in 1978, in the city of Jedda, on the Red Sea.

I had come to Jedda to delay my induction into the society of money at home, to postpone the passage into adulthood. I got a job working at a newspaper I'll call the *Saudi News*. For two years, every day of the week except Thursday, I left home at three in the afternoon and crossed the silent, blazing city to the ramshackle hut that housed the paper. I worked till three in the morning. As I walked home, there was occasionally a fugitive breath of wind, though it was never cool. Sometimes I found myself in fabulous suburbs that had not existed the week before, raised like volcanic islands, an eruption of money.

The room I worked in had two windows blocked by air conditioners, four steel desks, four broken chairs, and four manual typewriters. On the last Wednesday night of every lunar month, I sensed the room begin to shake and roar; the accountant glided in with his briefcase and flip-flops; a blizzard of Arabic greeting; and then the haul of envelopes from the briefcase, like fish pulled in on a hand line. Sheathed in air-conditioned sweat, I signed for 10,000 Saudi Arabian riyals in bills—bundles of them, held by twine, the price of a month's labor, boredom, and misery.

My colleagues picked up their money, gripping the twine between the middle and index fingers of the right hand, flicked it over, and with the thumb counted the notes fanned by the counterforce of the flick. This action, both familiar and deft, occupied them for half a minute. I left my money uncounted. I was indifferent to its sum, not only because a missing 100-riyal note really made no difference in a 10,000-riyal bundle but also because I sensed that indifference, the vice and virtue of the British, was my chief protection in this jail.

What need did I have of money? There was

nothing I wanted to buy in the *suq*. I had no interest in conspicuous consumption, for where were my witnesses, my publicists? I didn't care to provide for my old age, for I didn't think I'd have one. Anyway, I couldn't put the money in a bank to accrue interest, for interest was *haram*, forbidden, and the banks paid their depositors just half a percent in commission. I could not own real estate, for this was denied to foreigners. I could not put the money at risk, for there was no stock market.

I read Adam Smith for the first time that year. I knew that of the three great, original, and constituent orders of society he identified, I belonged not with the landowner or the capitalist but with the laborer. I received laborer's wages, the real value of which arose not in the money I received but—Smith again—in what could be got with it. In my case, that was nothing. I was a slave.

In 1980, I picked fights with several influential men and was politely shown the way to the airport. I converted my bundles of riyals into sterling: they were worth, I guess, about 30,000 pounds, the equivalent of about 75,000 today. Because I regarded money with suspicion, I changed it into property of one type or another, which accorded with the spirit of an inflationary age. The money became, in its time, a mortgaged house in Lavender Hill, a glacially slow racehorse, stock in the Dresdner Bank, an excessive number of eighteenth-century engravings of St. Petersburg, an apartment in lower Manhattan, stock in supermarket corporations. At each transition, it shed chips to stockbrokers, picture dealers, realtors, the Inland Revenue, the Customs and Excise, the IRS, and the Federal Taxation Office but always reassembled itself into more money than at its previous dissolution.

I traveled the world during this period and amassed an obsessive collection of banknotes, which I stored in the drawer of an old desk my mother had left me in her will: a highly symptomatic action, I recognize. There were Yemeni and Iranian riyals; Kuwaiti and Iraqi dinars; West and East German marks; United States and Fijian and Maria Theresa dollars; zlotys; rubles; rupees; shekels; Ecuadorean sucres; Mexican and Chilean pesos; French and Swiss francs; British, Turkish, and Egyptian pounds. I also had a mineral from Antarctica, collected from an outcrop at eighty degrees south latitude, to commemorate a barter economy, where exchange and value subsisted in cigarettes, aviation spirit, and the blessed warmth of Red Army–issue felt boots.

This was not a miser's collection; with a few exceptions, the banknotes became useless as a hoard or medium of exchange. I experimented once with a large Turkish bill, ten years old, which I presented at the Istanbul airport in the belief it might still buy a pack of cigarettes. It couldn't buy Chiclets. I kept the notes because I liked to sense their value evaporating, their moneyness seeping into the old satinwood until they were just colored paper.

At about this time, a further change came over my life. The money from Jedda began to breed, convulsively. While I slept, or was drunk, or made love, or smoked a Benson on the porch, my money worked and, as far as I could tell, for greater reward than I did. I felt regret: the lightness that comes with empty

[Poem]

ONE EXPLANATION

By Jennifer O'Grady. From Singular Constructions, *a forthcoming collection of O'Grady's poems. "One Explanation" originally appeared in* The Georgia Review. *O'Grady lives in New York City.*

Don't think that chicken didn't want
to stay where she was in the clean,
feathered grass behind the white fence
and the crippled wheelbarrow
glistening with wet, red light.

Across the blank road: its dusty shoulder,
bunched weeds, a hubcap, shredded tissue
and some small, bright bones.
A few pebbles gleam like seeds.
A car spins by, its taillights
two blind and backward eyes.

And she scratches across—not because
logic compels her but because the sense
of loss inherent in what remains
kicks forward, the same way the space
between sentences with its black
period, its silence,
makes us hurry on.
All this means
little to a chicken, but grass
imagined is always greener, sweeter,
as is the sweet release of motion
towards a new sentence, a new place—
as if *home* were something
we could leave behind us
like words, or bones, or a quiet yard,
where all we ever wanted was
to get to the other side.

pockets; the airy, tremulous sense of self that had been mine throughout my teens; the alienation from even the fabric of commercial society, its street corners and bullying office blocks and lighted shops—all were now lost to me, possibly forever. I felt obscurely disabled.

When analyzing this new situation, I thought perhaps there was some quality about my labor from 1978 to 1980, some particular virtue that had given it uncommon power. I once accosted a man in the South Seas who was planting some taro root; he told me that this action, which took up just twenty minutes of a rainy morning, was enough to keep his family in food and cash for a year. No doubt at the depths of every *rentier*'s existence, from duke to retiree, there is the faint shadow cast by some dead labor, but it is lost in the glitter of possession and present income.

The onset of my prosperity occurred at a time of exaggerated esteem for money. In Britain, Germany, the countries of central Europe, Russia, Latin America—indeed, everywhere I went, but particularly in Britain—money was quickly displacing all other psychological goals. Duty, religion, public service, liberty, equality, justice, and aristocracy—the cultural flesh that clothed the bones of money for those who possessed it—all became suspect: only money, it seemed, was to be trusted. Only money could measure success or failure, happiness or misery. Only money could reward or punish. If only governments would stand back, then money—which contained all knowledge and reconciled all clashes of human will—would see us right. Money was good.

I was in New York on the morning of October 19, 1987, and felt the foundation of this new religion shake. That morning I concluded that a failure of money in two of its aspects—measure of value and medium of exchange—was possible, ever more so as money increased in abstraction, losing even the gossamer physicality of banknotes and becoming a mere impulse in an electronic ledger. In London and New York, I met people who had invested fortunes in financial enterprises they simply could not define or explain. No doubt quite soon a bank would discover that it had lost its capital in these obscure speculations; other banks would fall in sympathy; there would be a depression in trade; then trade wars; then killing wars.

Back in London, on a table at a junk fair in Hampstead, among fake Bohemian glass and ratty trinkets, I saw a set of currency notes in a cellophane wrapper. Behind the table was a small old woman. She seemed fragile, cunning, old-fashioned, cossetted, like a painted Easter egg in cotton wool. I looked at the glass and trinkets and then, in an offhand way, at the notes.

"How much are these?"

She looked at me. She was trying to establish their value in British money, which was not easy for her, because they had no value to her and, because she did not know of my obsession, she did not know their value to me. She could not judge my willingness to buy, only my ability, and for that she had to look to my appearance, which was not encouraging: I was wearing jeans and flip-flops and had not shaved. I had abandoned financial speculation, and even spending money, except in a new addiction to tobacco: the gold of the pack soothed and excited me more than the metal ever had.

"It'll have to be twenty-five pounds. They're..."

I knew what they were. I picked up the notes and put them down again. The topmost was biscuit-colored, watermarked, in good condition. Its face value was a hundred crowns. It was dated January 1, 1943, in Austrian German and signed by a Jakob Edelstein. Its reverse showed the sum and a warning in High German that read, ANY PERSON COUNTERFEITING OR COPYING THESE BILLS OR HANDLING FORGED BILLS WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED. In a roundel was a nice portrait of Moses carrying the Ten Commandments.

I paid twenty pounds.

At that moment my thoughts, though not necessarily in this order, were: how deep are the ironies of my obsession with currency that, for these notes, which never ever bought anything, I have just exchanged something that will buy this lady heat or light or *Kaffee und Kuchen;* and that I am now reversing the famous law that holds that bad money drives out good. For the money in its wrapper on the table was not just bad, it was the worst ever minted. These notes, which were signed by the Chief Elder of the Council of Jews in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt in Bohemia and issued as wages or dole, barely circulated, and were used chiefly as counters in card games. Jakob Edelstein was murdered at Birkenau on July 20, 1944. The notes stood in the same relation to reality as the postcards that deported prisoners sent from Upper Silesia: *The journey was exhausting but without incident. Omi sends love.* The fraud and consolation inherent in all money becomes, in these *Gettokronen,* pure deceit, pure fantasy. People believed in them, as we all believe in money, because without it we cannot live in the world. As Byron kept a skull upon his desk, so I keep these notes in their cellophane wrapper so that I do not forget the people of Theresienstadt and my eventual pauper's grave. ■

REACTIONARY CHIC

How the Nineties right recycles the bombast of the Sixties left

By Lewis H. Lapham

The 104th Congress assembled in Washington on January 4 amid a dark murmur of sworn oaths about rescuing the captive spirit of American success from the dungeons of big government, and as I listened to the right-wing radio broadcasters sending their furious signals from their newly installed transmitters in the basement of the Capitol, I was struck by the resemblance between this season's Republican revolution and the old countercultural rebellion of thirty years ago. Once again the partisans of a romantic anti-politics intended a guerrilla raid on the wicked cities of death and time. Although nobody described the mission in precisely those words, the exuberant cheers welcoming Newt Gingrich to the Speaker's chair in the House of Representatives (loud cries of "Newt!" "Newt!" "Newt!") swelled with high purpose and zealous intent, the applause rising to the pitch of enthusiasm appropriate to the arrival of a hero or a saint. Here at last was the purifying wind from the South, the politician who had been touring the country both before and after the November election preaching the gospel of revolt, sacker of shibboleths and government spending programs come to lead the American people out of the deserts of the welfare state.

Under the circumstances and given the fierce expectations gathered on the Republican side of the aisle, Gingrich's inaugural address as Speaker of the House was surprisingly and uncharacteristically mild. Pronouncing the occasion "historic," he put aside for the moment his familiar persona as arrogant bully and humbly introduced himself as an adopted child and a common man. He expressed his approval of Franklin D. Roosevelt's social conscience and Benjamin Franklin's faith in God, and generously distributed the alms of his compassion to people who were poor and black as

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IT IS THE SCORNFUL NEWT GINGRICH, CLEARLY A MAN FOR ALL GRIEVANCES, WHO SUMS UP THE WHOLE OF THE CONSERVATIVE OBJECTION

well as to people who were white and rich. The "most painful proble abroad in the land he identified as "moral problems," and toward the of his speech he began to talk about bringing the United States m nearly in line with the kingdom of Heaven.

The speech was at once pious and sly, and although I suspect that so of the talk-show hosts in the basement were disappointed by its nonc bative tone and because nobody was handing out weapons as well as p itudes, the Republican majority received it with gusts of tumultuous plause (more cries of "Newt!" "Newt!" "Newt!"), and quite a few of members looked as if they stood ready to carry the Spea on their shoulders to the White House or the Air Space Museum.[1]

Like so much else about the Republican risorgimento, the pol cal passion was attached to a preferred image rather than a plain or biguous fact, not to the Gingrich who had just delivered a conciliat speech but to the Gingrich renowned for being nasty and brutish short—the militant Gingrich blessed with a boll weevil's appetite for struction who had ordered a skull of *Tyrannosaurus rex* as an ornament his new office in the Longworth building.

It was the scornful Gingrich who had come to stand during his sixt years in Congress as the shared symbol of resentment binding toget the several parties of the disaffected right—the Catholic conservati with the Jewish neoconservatives, the libertarians with the authorit ans, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition with the disciples of Da Duke. Clearly a man for all grievances, Gingrich summed up (in his p son as well as in his lectures on the decline and fall of American civil tion) the whole of the conservative objection that since the dawn of Reagan revolution in the early 1980s has comprised the course of quired reading at the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterp Institute. Over the last fifteen years I probably have read two or th thousand variations of the complaint—editorials in the *Wall Street Jo nal*, articles in *Commentary* and *The New Criterion*, the speeches William Bennett and the columns of George Will, the soliloquies of R Limbaugh, the books in the line of frowning succession, from Al Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* through George Gilder's *We and Poverty*, Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, and Charles Murr *Losing Ground*, etc.—but when I delete the repetitions and piece toget what remains of a coherent narrative, the entire sum of the great sub ban remonstrance fits within the span of a short fairy tale. As follows:

Once upon a time, before the awful misfortunes of the 1960s, Amer was a theme park constructed by nonunion labor along the lines of Garden of Eden. But then something terrible happened, and a plague guitarists descended upon the land. Spawned by the sexual confusion the amoral news media, spores of Marxist ideology blew around in wind, multiplied the powers of government, and impregnated the Engl departments at the Ivy League universities, which then gave birth to monster of deconstruction that devoured the arts of learning. Pretty s the trout began to die in Wyoming, and the next thing that anyb knew the nation's elementary schools had been debased, too many fav were being granted to women and blacks, federal bureaucrats were smo ering capitalist entrepreneurs with the pillows of government regulati prime-time television was broadcasting continuous footage from Sod

[1] *Peggy Noonan both captured and embodied the fervent spirit of the occasion in an torial published in the* Wall Street Journal *under the headline "Bliss to Be Alive." S ing that she had been present at the glorious moment when Representative Gingrich came a great man," she observed that "now and then history turns electric. Last we was wonderful to see the current light up this town." She heard in Gingrich's speech trumpet of deliverance—"the authentic sound of post-Reagan conservatism . . . the thentic sound of the next ten years."*

l Gomorrah, and the noble edifice of Western civilization had col-
sed into the rubble of feminist prose.

The story somehow made more sense when set against the operatic
kdrop of the Cold War, possibly because the familiar stage design re-
led to mind the first act of *The Nutcracker Suite* when the toy soldier
s battle with the army of horrific mice. The evil Soviet empire fur-
hed the book and lyrics for the election campaigns of both Presidents
gan and Bush, and for a few years it was possible to imagine that the
gus blighting the apple trees in the American orchard had something
do with the weather on the totalitarian steppe. The sudden tearing
vn of the Berlin Wall took everybody by surprise—the director of the
A as well as the editors at *National Review*—and the tellers of the tale
nd themselves in pressing need of other antagonists to take the place
the grim but harmless ogre. The departure of the Russian trolls
mpted a casting call for prospective bogeymen and likely villains.
e Japanese couldn't play the
t because they were lending
United States too much
ney; the Colombian drug
ds were too few and too well
nnected in Miami; Manuel
riega and Saddam Hussein
ed the audition; the Arab oil
tel was broke; and the Chi-
se were busy making shirts
Ralph Lauren.

n the absence of enemies
oad, the protectors of the
erican dream began looking
inward signs of moral weak-
s rather than outward shows
military force; instead of ex-
ining the dossiers of foreign
nts, they searched the local
wspapers for flaws in the
erican character, and the surveillance satellites overhead Leipzig and
astopol were reassigned stations over metropolitan Detroit and the
k lots of Hollywood studios. Within a matter of months the authorities
nded up as suspects a motley crowd of specific individuals and general
egories of subversive behavior and opinion—black male adolescents as
ll as leftist English professors, multiculturalists of all descriptions, the
eral news media, the 1960s, the government in Washington, welfare
thers, homosexuals, drug criminals, performance artists, illegal immi-
nts. Some enemies of the state were easier to identify than others, but
all instances the tellers of the tale relied on images seen in dreams or on
network news rather than on the lessons of their own experience.

Believing themselves under assault from what they took to be the hos-
forces of history, the heirs and servants of American oligarchy chose
cast themselves as rebels against "the system," as revolutionary idealists
dds with a world they never made. The pose was as ludicrous as it was
miliar. Here were the people who owned most of what was worth own-
in the country (the banks and business corporations as well as the
evision networks and most of the members of Congress) pretending
t they were victims of a conspiracy raised against them by the institu-
ns that they themselves controlled. What was even more extraordinary
s the general likeness between their own revolutionary pretensions and
posturing of the 1960s counterculture that they so often and so loudly
nounced. Although I had made occasional notes over a number of
rs about the similarities between the two camps of *soi-disant* revolu-
naries, it wasn't until last October 19, during the course of a publish-

THE SERVANTS OF AMERICAN OLIGARCHY HAVE CAST THEMSELVES AS REVOLUTIONARY IDEALISTS AT ODDS WITH A WORLD THEY NEVER MADE

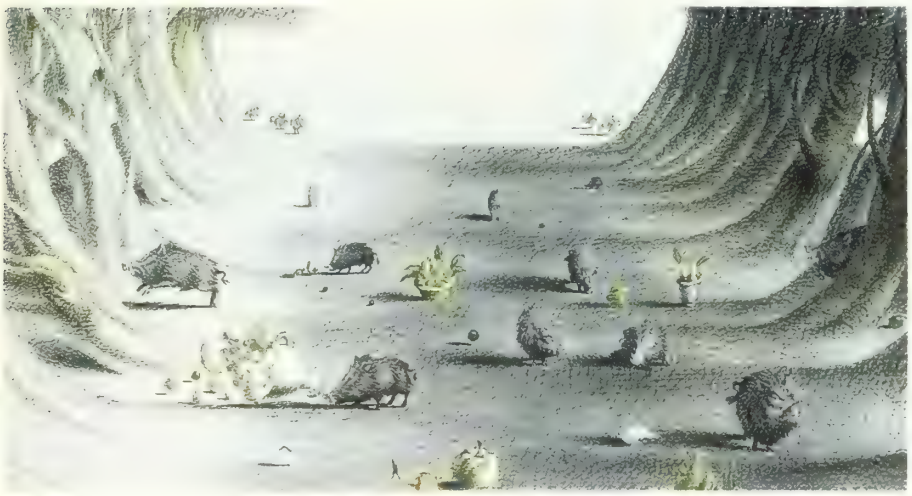


trations by Tullio Pericoli

LISTENING TO TALK ABOUT THE "TYRANNY OF THE LEFT," I UNDERSTOOD I WAS REVISITING A MAKE-BELIEVE TIME NOT UNLIKE THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

er's lunch at the Harvard Club in New York, that I fully appreciated the extent to which the reactionary chic of the 1990s mimics the set of 1960s attitudes memorialized by Tom Wolfe in the phrase "radical chic."

Sponsored by the Manhattan Institute (a think tank that funds rightist political theory) and meant to welcome the arrival of a new work of neoconservative doctrine (*Dictatorship of Virtue*, by Richard Bernstein), the lunch attracted a crowd of fifty individuals who for the most part were affiliated with publications and charitable foundations (among them *Forbes*, *Commentary*, and the John M. Olin Foundation) known for their allegiance to the miracle of finance capitalism. The intellectual tide last fall was running strongly in favor of more prisons and higher interest rates, and the mood in the dining room was smiling and complacent. The Democrats clearly were on their way to defeat in the November elections; President Clinton had been brought up on charges of sexual harassment by Paula Jones; Newt Gingrich was marching through Georgia with "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and the terrible swift swords of Christian vengeance. Even more to the point, two other works allied with Bernstein's tract (Charles Murray and the late Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* and William Henry's *In Defense of Elitism*) already had reached the season's best-seller lists, which was good news because the authors of both works, like Bernstein, affirmed the great truth so dear to the hearts of almost everybody in the room—i.e., that the American upper middle class was a dwindling minority besieged by enemies at all points of the moral and intellectual compass, and thus deserving (like other aggrieved citizens) of protection and special privilege.[2]



Introduced as "the John Keats of the *New York Times*," Bernstein, earnest and ingratiating and safe, set forth the thesis of his book as an ominous comparison between the present moment in late twentieth-century America and the moment of the *dérapage* in late eighteenth-century France when the enlightened idealism that had inspired the immortal "Declaration of the Rights of Man" began to degenerate into the Terror forced upon a hapless people by the guillotine and the Committee of Public Safety. He was addressing his remarks to people as little threatened by the circumstances he described as the Wednesday matinee audience at *Les Misérables*, but all present were thrilled beyond words to know that they too were living in stirring times, that the barbarians once again were at the gates, and that, when one really got to thinking about it, Sam Donaldson and David Geffen were just as awful as Danton and Robespierre.

Listening to Bernstein talk about "the tyranny of the left" crushing the universities under the iron heel of "moralistic liberalism," I understood that I was revisiting a make-believe time and place not unlike the one

[2] *Before coming to lunch I had taken the precaution of reading the book. Bernstein's complete list of enemies appears on page 230. "The penetration of the new sensibility into the elite institutions, in the universities, the press, the liberal churches, the foundations, the schools, and show business, on PBS and 'Murphy Brown,' at Harvard and Dallas Baptist University, on editorial boards and op-ed pages, at the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the National Education Association, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the National Council of Churches, and the Pew Charitable Trusts."*

that used to be known as the Age of Aquarius. The wording of the manifestos might have changed (William Bennett's "Empower America" in place of Huey Newton's "Power to the people"), and so might have the age and social standing of the malcontents (Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh sitting in for Lenny Bruce and Abbie Hoffman at the drums of a politically incorrect comedy), but the habits of mind remained all but identical, and so did the air of self-righteousness and the settled conviction that virtue is a trait inherited at birth. Thirty years ago it was "the conservative establishment" that was at fault, a conspiracy largely composed of university professors, government bureaucrats, and network television executives who couldn't play guitar and trembled at the sound of Dylan's harmonica. Now it is "the liberal establishment" that is at fault, a conspiracy largely composed of university professors, government bureaucrats, and network television executives who can't quote freely from *The Federalist* and tremble before the wisdom of Alvin Toffler and Arianna Huffington.[3]

Once I began to draw the parallels between the radical Sixties left and the reactionary Nineties right (between Bernstein's grandiose moment of *dérapage* and the "Days of Rage" announced by Mark Rudd and Bernadine Dohrn), I found myself making a longer list of the sentiments and tactics common to both bands of guerrillas gathered in the mountains of what the Chicago Seven liked to call "the Higher Consciousness":

1) The definition of the United States as a nation betrayed (in the 1960s by the government and the defense industries, in the 1990s by the government and the news media).

2) The revolution proclaimed in the name of the dispossessed (identified in 1965 as the urban and Appalachian poor, in 1995 as "the forgotten American middle class").

3) The demonization of the ordinary functions of government (the Pentagon in 1965, the IRS in 1995).

4) The salvation of private individuals taking precedence over the restoration of public institutions ("personal awareness" in the 1960s, "personal responsibility" in the 1990s).

5) Romantic arcadianism (Carlos Castaneda and *The Whole Earth Catalog* replaced by the L. L. Bean catalogue and the visionary prophecies of George Gilder).

6) The revolution announced by people believing themselves entitled to more than they already possess (the children of oligarchy in 1965, the servants of oligarchy in 1995).

7) The delight in military analogies (the 1960s Weathermen, quoting Chairman Mao: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"; Ralph Reed speaking on behalf of the 1990s Christian Coalition: "If you reveal your location, all it does is allow your opponent to improve his artillery bearings...").

8) The insurgents allied with the auxiliary forces of religion (in the 1960s with William Sloane Coffin and the antiwar protest, in the 1990s with Pat Robertson and the anti-abortion protest).

LIKE THE SIXTIES RADICALS, MEMBERS OF THE NINETIES RIGHT BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE ENTITLED TO MORE THAN THEY ALREADY POSSESS

[3] *Arianna Huffington's New Age meditations,* The Fourth Instinct, *appear on Representative Gingrich's unofficial list of recommended reading; the official list, the one he hands out to stray visitors wandering through the halls of the Capitol, comprises the following texts: the* Declaration of Independence, *1776;* The Federalist, *1788;* Democracy in America, *by Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835–40;* The Effective Executive, *by Peter F. Drucker (Harper & Row, 1966; reissued by Harper Business, 1993);* Washington: The Indispensable Man, *by James T. Flexner (Little, Brown, 1974; reissued, 1994);* Leadership and the Computer, *by Mary E. Boone (Prima Publishing, 1991; reissued, 1994);* Creating a New Civilization: The Politics of the Third Wave, *by Alvin and Heidi Toffler (with a foreword by Gingrich and published by the Progress and Freedom Foundation, 1994);* Working Without a Net: How to Survive & Thrive in Today's High Risk Business World, *by Morris R. Shechtman (Prentice Hall, 1994).*

THE RADICAL CONSERVATIVES FEEL THAT THEY OWE NOTHING TO THE REPUBLIC EXCEPT A DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR GOLF SWINGS

9) The radio as the voice of revolution (FM music stations in the 1960s, AM talk stations in the 1990s).

The countercultural insurgents of the 1960s were forever demanding "Freedom now," by which they meant the freedom from constraint, the freedom to do as they pleased, the freedom to go wandering through a world in which the prettiest girls belonged to the well-connected, the adventurous, and the strong. What else is the promise of the new Republican risorgimento if not the dream of politics lost and American pastoralism regained, of the freedom to go plundering through a world in which the best-looking real estate belongs to the well-connected, the adventurous, and the strong? In the 1990s sequel, Cobb County, Georgia, displaces the Woodstock nation as the railhead of crusade, and the locus of the earthly paradise moves from a commune in the White Mountains to a gated community in Tucson or Palm Springs, but the paying of income tax is still a crime against conscience and a sin against nature. If the flower children believed they owed nothing to the Republic except an encore of "Blowin' in the Wind," their middle-aged avatars believe they owe nothing to the Republic except a demonstration of their golf swings.

Like the 1960s radical left, the 1990s reactionary right declares its principled opposition to the passage of time (the manifestos written by children who never wanted to grow up revised by parents who never want to grow old), but despite everybody's best efforts and the wonders of modern cosmetics, days pass and things change. After the age of forty, clean shirts and station wagons seem more in line with what America is all about than long hair and motorcycles. The rebellious impulse might remain as strong as it once was, and so might the anarchic turn of phrase, but the terms of what in the 1960s were known as "nonnegotiable demands" now tend to express the certainties of the established order and the doctrines of the bottom line. The partisans of the conservative cause retain their faith in the romance of natural man, but having learned to appreciate the wisdom of Adam Smith, they recant their loyalty to Rousseau and announce a program of liberating capitalism instead of liberating consciousness. In the Republican remake of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, the rebellious pilgrims travel west as an embassy of computer salesmen, and instead of looking for Judy Collins in the hotel bar, they order up *Romancing Sarah* from the hotel library of adult films.

But to whom do they then direct their protests, and what names do they put on their placards and cast like stones into the teeth of time? How do they organize the sullen draft of their hastily recruited enemies into coherent legions and simple slogans?

As so often in moments of rhetorical crisis, it was the belligerent Gingrich who answered the questions with the phrase "discredited liberal establishment," which connoted both the absence of virtue and the presence of a monolith not unlike the old Soviet Union. Understood as a conspiracy of dunces, the "discredited liberal establishment" could be held responsible for all the mistakes that had been made with the planning of the American Eden. It was the "discredited liberal establishment" that opened the Pandora's box out of which sprang the three evil spirits that wrecked the economic and spiritual environment. As follows:

THE WELFARE STATE

To hear the story told on the fairways of the nation's better golf courses, the American welfare state is a foreign country that resembles Rwanda or Chiapas. Although administered as a protectorate by the U.S. government and supplied with an ungodly sum of money, the metaphysical terrain is so harsh, and the moral climate so poor, that we

can never rescue the place, and we would all be better off if we just withdrew our army of Harvard sociologists and let the local rulers sign a treaty with the Baptist Church. If the line of argument is familiar, it is because it so closely parallels the argument advanced by the radical Sixties left in opposition to the Vietnam War. Why continue to underwrite an expensive and futile expedition doomed to certain failure?

The blurring of the distinctions between crime and race and moral behavior plays to the prejudice of an audience eager to believe the worst that can be said of people whom they would rather not know, and to the extent that the word "poor" can be made to serve as a synonym for "black," the big-city slums become alien nations on the wrong side of the cultural and economic frontiers. Gingrich is especially skillful at conveying his point in the unspoken subtext, and during last year's election campaign he often summarized the nation's troubles in a single sentence made to the measure of the six o'clock news: "It is impossible to maintain civilization with twelve-year-olds having babies, fifteen-year-olds killing each other, seventeen-year-olds dying of AIDS, and eighteen-year-olds receiving diplomas they cannot read."

INSTEAD OF SAYING THAT SUFFERING MIGHT BE ALLEVIATED BY GOVERNMENT, GINGRICH REMANDED THE OBLIGATION TO CHRISTIAN CHARITY



What he had in mind (and what his audiences knew he had in mind) was the desolation of Harlem or East Los Angeles. Taking a similar approach in his inaugural remarks as Speaker of the House, Gingrich only once used the word "black"—in reference to the Black Caucus. He talked about little children found in Dumpsters, or thrown off the roofs of Chicago housing projects, or buried at the age of eleven with their teddy bears, but he avoided mentioning the race of the deceased. Instead of saying that their suffering might be alleviated by the acts of government (or that maybe the mechanics of finance capitalism had something to do with the buried teddy bears), he remanded the obligation to Christian charity and appealed to his fellow politicians to take heed of the parable of the good Samaritan.

The referral is standard procedure among the apologists for the Republican right. William Bennett, author of the best-selling compendium of uplifting anecdote *The Book of Virtues*, seldom misses an opportunity to suggest that the moral pestilence in the society rises like fog in the urban slums: "During the last three decades a lot has gone wrong in America. Our society is far more violent and vulgar than it used to be. We have experienced enormous increases in violent crime, out-of-wedlock births, abortions, divorces, suicides, child abuse and welfare dependency. The answer to much of what ails us is spiritual and moral regeneration."

Applying the same kind of sophism to the questions of intelligence, Murray and Herrnstein's book *The Bell Curve* argues that the excessive number of crimes committed by black people, as well as their poverty and lack of employment, can be attributed, more or less directly, to their low I.Q. ratings. The pseudoscientific speculation adds a few more brush strokes to the standard portrait of black people as synonyms for catastrophe. The image deletes the greater part of the black presence in the country—the rise of the black middle class over the last thirty years, the successes achieved under the rules of affirmative action, the real ratios between impoverished white and black people (two white to one

THE GOVERNING CLASSES CAN NOW COMFORT THEMSELVES WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THE MISERY OF THE POOR IS NO ONE'S FAULT BUT THEIR OWN

black), the dramatis personae appearing in television situation comedies, the complexion of the United States Army—but it is an image that serves the plotlines of a bedtime story about the wages of sin.[4] As conditions in the slums deteriorate, which they inevitably must as a consequence of their designation as enemy countries, the slums come to look just the way they are supposed to look in the suburban imagination. The burned-out buildings and the number of dead in the streets support the notion that crimes allied with poverty can be classified as individual moral problems rather than a common political problem. At long last and with a clear conscience, the governing and possessing classes can comfort themselves with the thought that poor people deserve what they get, that their misery is nobody's fault but their own. The bleak prospect confirms the Republican faith in prisons and serves as an excuse for imposing de facto martial law on a citizenry construed as a dangerous rabble. Even the sunniest neoconservative optimisms carry the threat of stern punishment, and the tone of the intolerant scold that appears in the speeches of Gingrich and Bennett (as well as in those of Irving Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, and Michael Novak) has been most succinctly expressed by *Washington Times* columnist Cal Thomas: "If we will not be constrained from within by the power of God, we must be constrained from without by the power of the State, acting as God's agent."



THE LIBERAL NEWS MEDIA

Among the partisans of the populist and suburban right, no article of faith is more devoutly held than the one about the feral cynicism of the metropolitan news media. Although nobody at the mall ever can remember seeing a journalist who didn't look like the boy or girl next door, the crowd sitting around the tables in the food court likes to think that the news comes to them from sallow-faced leftists who cut up the wholesome American moral fabric into patches of socialist propaganda and strips of pornographic film.

The supposition bears comparison to Jane Fonda's belief in the innocence of Ho Chi Minh. The manufacture and sale of the nation's news is the work of very large, very rich, and very timid corporations—the Washington Post Co., Fox Broadcasting, and Turner Network Television. The managers of the commercial television networks, like the publishers of large and prosperous newspapers, define news as anything that turns a profit, no matter how indecent the photograph or how inane the speeches, and they seldom take chances with any line of thought that fails to agree with what their audiences wish to see and hear.

[4] *In the proposal submitted to prospective publishers of* The Bell Curve, *Murray didn't mince words about the bigotry that he meant to confirm and sustain. "[There are] a huge number of well-meaning whites who fear that they are closet racists, and this book tells them they are not. It's going to make them feel better about things they already think but do not know how to say."*

The *Wall Street Journal*, probably the most widely read newspaper in the country, heavily favors the conservative side on any and all questions of public policy, and both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* fortify their op-ed pages with columnists who strongly defend the established order—William Safire and A. M. Rosenthal in the *Times*, Charles Krauthammer, George Will, and Richard Harwood in the *Post*. The vast bulk of the nation's talk-radio shows (commanding roughly 80 percent of the audience) reflect a conservative bias, and so do all but one or two of the television talk shows that deal with political topics on PBS, CNN, and CNBC.

Among the smaller journals of opinion, the presiding sentiment is even more bluntly conservative, a state of affairs that didn't come to pass by accident. As long ago as 1972, the corporations began to worry about the number of longhaired hippies attending Grateful Dead concerts and George McGovern rallies, and a cadre of rightist philanthropic foundations (among them Olin, Smith Richardson, Lilly, and Scaife) set about the task of cornering the market in ideas. The allegiance to their preferred worldview as well as to their financial patronage shapes the socioeconomic debate presented in the pages of *National Review*, *Commentary*, *Chronicles of Culture*, *The American Spectator*, *National Interest*, *The New Criterion*, *The Public Interest*, *Policy Review*, etc. On the nation's lecture circuit the voices of conscience that attract the biggest crowds and command the highest fees (George Will, Gordon Liddy, Safire, et al.) all speak for one or another of the parties of the right. Augmenting the instruments of the nominally secular media, the chorus of religious broadcasts and pamphlets (among them Pat Robertson's *700 Club* and the publications under the direction of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon), as well as the direct-mail propaganda mills run by right-wing polemicists on the order of Richard Viguerie, envelops the country in a continuous din of stereophonic conservative sound.

"YOU ARE GOING TO BE HATED," RUSH LIMBAUGH TOLD THE NEW REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMEN. "REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE TARGETS. REMAIN HOSTILE"

As proof of the absurdity implicit in the complaint about the liberal news media, I can think of no better demonstration than the one offered by Rush Limbaugh to the C-Span cameras in mid-December of last year at the Radisson Hotel in Baltimore. Ripe with self-congratulation and glistening under the lights like a Las Vegas lounge comic, Limbaugh appeared as the principal banquet speaker before an audience of newly elected Republican congressmen attending a three-day conference organized by the Heritage Foundation and meant to acquaint them with their tasks as saviors of the Republic. Eager and young and as freshly scrubbed as a cohort of college fraternity pledges, they laughed on cue at Limbaugh's sniggering jokes about President Clinton, condoms, and mushy-headed liberals. Limbaugh told them that in Washington they would find themselves surrounded on all sides by enemies, by newspaper columnists and anchorpersons as treacherous as Cokie Roberts, who would cajole them with flattery and then betray them for the price of a cheap headline. "You are going to be hated," Limbaugh said. "Remember that you are targets. Remain hostile."

After twelve years of the administrations of Presidents Reagan and Bush, and two years of the neo-Republican presidency of Bill Clinton, the notion of Washington as a city somehow hostile to political conservatives of any kind was as preposterous as Limbaugh's posing as a victim of liberal tyranny and persecution. The spectacle of his overstuffed pretension brought to mind the sight of Norman Mailer on various occasions in the late 1960s in New York and Washington presenting himself as a victim of fascist censorship and repression before a crowd of self-proclaimed freedom fighters wearing stylish ammunition belts from Saks Fifth Avenue. Like Mailer, Limbaugh was a best-selling author who knew how to provide copy to the credulous news media—two toy revolutionaries playing the part of Caliban, adjusting the grimace of their fright masks to reflect the seasonal fear of the prosperous middle class. During the same

THE MOURNFUL DEFENDERS OF CLASSICAL LEARNING IGNORE THE POINT THAT THE U.S. MAKES BUSINESS ITS CULTURE AND ITS CULTURE A BUSINESS

week that Limbaugh exhorted the faithful in Baltimore to defy the foul fiend of the liberal press, he was appearing as celebrity shill in television advertisements for the *New York Times*.

THE MARBLE RUIN OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

The last of the dearly beloved tales told around the campfires of the reactionary right is the one about the once sacred temples of American art and political philosophy turned into pornographic movie theaters by the same crew of guitarists and literary critics that poisoned the pure streams of Republican economic thought. The story has so many variants and inflections that it is hard to fix the precise tone of indignation (sometimes choleric, sometimes wistful or smug), but it invariably entails the assigning of subversive motives to the universities, the Hollywood movie companies, the popular-music business, the publishing industry, the Broadway stage, and the aforesaid liberal news media. Although the bad news sometimes takes grandiose forms—Irving Kristol informing the guests at conservative banquets that rock and roll music presents a greater threat to Western civilization than world Communism—for the most part it comes down to a complaint about a cheapened sense of aesthetics and school curricula debased by trendy (i.e., leftist) political alloys. Instead of reading Chaucer, students read the works of minor African poets; instead of going to see Shakespeare's plays, they gape at the sins of the flesh paraded through the courtyard of *Melrose Place*.

Again, as with so many of the other excited announcements emanating from the press offices of the right, the facts of the matter have been suborned by the preferred image. The mournful defenders of classical learning and Renaissance humanism ignore the point that the United States makes business its culture and its culture a business. Art is what sells, and education is what draws a paying crowd. Americans go to school to improve their lot, to study the arts of getting ahead in the world, to acquire the keys to the commercial kingdom stocked with the material blessings that constitute our society's highest and most heavenly rewards. The objectives conform to the popular as opposed to the privileged understanding of democracy. As Americans, we make the heroic attempt to educate all our citizens, to provide as many people with as many opportunities as possible, to do for our children what we couldn't do for ourselves. Because the schools serve a political idea (as opposed to an intellectual idea), they cannot afford to make invidious comparisons between the smart kids and the dumb kids, between the kids who read Montaigne's essays and those who read Spider-Man comics, and contrary to the failing report cards issued by people like Allan Bloom, it isn't necessary to know much about the liberal arts to make a success of an American life. Children learn by example as well as by precept, and they have only to look at Times Square and Disneyland, or consider the triumphs of Roseanne or Ronald Perlman, to know that society bestows its rewards on the talent for figuring a market, not on a knowledge of Thucydides.

Nor is the popular culture by any means as immoral as it is dreamed of in the philosophy of the academic deans on the neoconservative and Christian right. As measured by its lists of best-selling books and long-running Broadway plays, as well as by its successful television comedies, sporting events, and popular songs, the American cultural enterprise (in 1995 as in 1895) is as irremediably conservative as it is relentlessly sentimental. During any Sunday's playing of the Top 40, the rap songs and heavy-metal rhythms show up at the bottom of the list, but as the countdown proceeds upward toward a kindly and forgiving providence, the music turns increasingly sweet and melodic. The lyrics almost always affirm the wisdom of a Rod McKuen poem or a speech by Peggy Noonan—love will last forever; our love will never die; you are the only one; my love for you is like a thou-

sand points of light. The same moral teaching informs ninety-eight of every hundred situation comedies that last more than three weeks on prime-time television. To watch *Home Improvement* or *The Simpsons* is to know that virtue triumphs, that love conquers all, and that in this best-of-all-possible American worlds, victory is always close at hand and children never starve.

In which of the country's leading newspapers does the editorial page defend adultery as a civil liberty or advance the social program of the Marquis de Sade? A study published last October by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago showed the American people to be astonishingly monogamous, and the moral attitudes governing the rules of sexual conduct at most of the nation's universities more nearly resemble the ones in effect in Victorian England than those on display in ancient Babylon or late eighteenth-century France. Notwithstanding the proliferation of peep shows made for cable television, we remain a deeply conservative, almost prudish, people, and sex, like art, most fetchingly presents itself as commercial advertisement (to hustle the business or move the product), not as an invitation to a waltz.[5]

When listening to people describe the marble ruin of American civilization (as if it were something seen in a Piranesi drawing or a Louisiana mangrove swamp), I'm always struck by the lack of a historical sense on the part of the tellers of the tale. Lately, I've been gathering research material for a book that touches upon the American condition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it's fair to say that the university curricula were always debased and the natives always restless. The incidence of crime in New York City in the 1870s or on the Texas frontier in the 1840s defined itself as a statistical ratio surpassing the percentages now being reported by the FBI. The divorce rates in colonial America exceeded those of the present day, and in 1905 the immigrant swarm on Manhattan's Lower East Side measured its density at 1,000 people per acre, a ratio that dwarfed the crowding in the slums of Bombay. On no less of an authority than that of Jonathan Edwards, God abandoned the American forest in the winter of 1719, and throughout most of the nineteenth century, prior to the advent of the media circus and Clint Eastwood movies, Americans attended public hangings and the freak shows mounted by impresarios on the order of P. T. Barnum.

At the presumably higher elevations of culture, the air was always thick with Christian piety and bourgeois sentiment. Herman Melville was condemned to obscurity, Mark Twain was obliged to present himself as an amiable clown, and Edith Wharton, together with Henry James and Ezra Pound, left for Europe. The joke about the marble ruin is that American civilization never was much of a match for Periclean Greece. When the tellers of the sad Republican tale agree to take questions on the subject (reluctantly and usually in a hurry to leave the lecture hall), it turns out that the lost culture for which they grieve is the culture best expressed by the sensibility of the 1950s, the musical comedies of Rodgers and Hammerstein, the history of the world as told by Disney and Time Life, the list of great books that everybody owns but nobody has read.

Hoisted up by the cranes of populist bombast to the platforms of great expectation, the newly enskied 104th Congress confronts an ancient problem in socioeconomics—how does a wealthy and increasingly nervous plutocracy preserve its privileges while at the same time maintaining its reputation as an oppressed minority and a noble cause? The answer is never easy, but the *soi-disant* anarchists of the 1990s reactionary right come poorly equipped for the task of making good on

HOW DOES A WEALTHY AND NERVOUS PLUTOCRACY PRESERVE ITS PRIVILEGES WHILE MAINTAINING ITS IMAGE AS AN OPPRESSED MINORITY?

[5] *The BBC produces two variants of the television drawing-room comedies that venture upon sexual subjects—an unexpurgated version for the British audience and a bowdlerized version for export to the more easily offended American market.*

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS, THE PARTIES OF THE RIGHT HAVE CONVERTED THE EMOTIONS OF ECONOMIC ANXIETY INTO THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL ANXIETY

their promises. Just as the mock insurgents of the 1960s staged their masques and dances against a backdrop of cardboard scenery, the rebels of the 1990s shape their morality play from images they have seen on television and abstractions they have discovered in books written by their friends and former economics professors. Their delight in theory and ignorance of history saps them of the strength to answer their own call to arms.

What they have in hand is a dissenting rhetoric best suited to cries from the wilderness, a feeling for nostalgia, a faith in the claptrap futurism of Alvin and Heidi Toffler, the dubious economic theory inherited from the early days of the Reagan revolution, and an instinct for repression. Although convenient to pop quizzes and the nightly television news, the syllabus of glib answers bears comparison to the secrets of the universe packaged for sale in the supermarket press, and it isn't likely to prepare the class for the midterm examination. The electorate last fall was saying something about its fear and uneasiness, about jobs being sent overseas and the future (their own and that of their children) beginning to look like the receding objects seen through the wrong end of a telescope. For the last ten or fifteen years, the parties of the right have managed to convert the emotions rooted in economic anxiety into the politics of cultural anxiety, substituting the questions of moral conduct and deportment (the marble ruin, the heathen poor) for the more intractable ones about the division of the national spoils.

But the act is getting harder to perform, and the audience in the first ten rows has begun to figure out the trick with the coins and the scarves. Let the interest rate continue to rise, and who will applaud the futurist cant ("Parallel Transformations!" "Paradigms!" "Quality Management!") so dear to the heart of Speaker Gingrich? Let the chimera of a balanced budget drift off into the haze of what Washington calls "the out years," and people might begin to notice the difference between the big print and the small print in the Contract With America.

The paragraphs in large print postulate a return to an imaginary time and place in which the work of government could be performed by a volunteer fire department—a few hardy fellows cleaning up the village green after a winter storm, a benign judge adjudicating the occasional land dispute or divorce proceeding, a friendly county official awarding the rights of way for five hundred miles of railroad track in Kansas. The provisions in small print grant the propertied classes the freedom to acquire more property—a freedom expressed, among other ways, in the form of capital-gains tax breaks in the amount of $25 billion a year—and for everybody else, more police and more sermons.

Whether dressed up as a radical or reactionary chic, the striking of revolutionary poses doesn't fit very well with necessarily bureaucratic forms of government. Norman Mailer once ran for the office of mayor of New York City, and I expect that he was glad to lose the election. Maybe I underestimate the talents of the 104th Congress, and maybe the new season's band of guerrillas will figure out a way to play at revolution without the slightest risk of damage to their automobiles or their bond portfolios. But I admit that I am curious to see Speaker Gingrich presenting his formulation of "New Hope!" "New Dialogue!" "New Access!" to a crowd of bankrupt farmers, or expounding for the benefit of five hundred unemployed textile-machine operators the theory of limitless wealth revealed to Adam Smith and Pitt the Younger in the workshop of the Napoleonic Wars. And if for some reason the mood in the hall should turn ugly, I can imagine the Speaker losing his temper and reverting to type as Gingrich the belligerent, sacker of shibboleths, and I like to think of him defying the storm of insults, shouting into the microphones, calling down on the heads of his enemies the terrible maxims of Voltaire, reminding them that the comfort of the rich rests upon an abundant supply of the poor. ■

A REVOLUTION, OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?

The mood these days in Washington's Republican salons is one of triumph and euphoria; plans are being made to occupy the capital for the next generation. But beneath the surface, signs of concern are starting to show. The staff director of the House Budget Committee recently admitted, "I don't know how many people thought we'd really have to implement these ideas."

As the Gingrich Congress debates the minutiae of term limits and capital-gains tax cuts, a new conversation is beginning among the backroom strategists whose memos and focus groups helped bring the party to power. How do Republicans placate an angry and fickle electorate that wants government to be slashed—as long as the cuts don't affect them? How do Republicans appease the ideologues who look at the November victory not as an opportunity for incremental economic reform but as a mandate for cultural war?

To cast some light on the next act of Washington's political drama, *Harper's Magazine* invited six of the party's leading theoreticians to gather together over lamb filet and crab cakes and debate the future of Republicanism.

The following transcript is based on a discussion held at La Brasserie restaurant in Washington, D.C. Paul Tough served as moderator.

PAUL TOUGH
is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine.

DAVID FRUM
is the author of Dead Right. *He has worked as an editor for the editorial page of the* Wall Street Journal *and as a columnist for* Forbes. *Currently, he is a weekly commentator for National Public Radio's* Morning Edition *and a monthly columnist for the* American Spectator.

WILLIAM KRISTOL
is the chairman of Project for the Republican Future. He served as Vice President Dan Quayle's chief of staff during the Bush Administration.

FRANK LUNTZ
is the president of Luntz Research. He has worked as an adviser to Newt Gingrich and as a pollster for Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan. He conducted the voter research used to market the Contract With America.

MIKE MURPHY
is a senior partner of the Murphy Pintak Gaunter Agency, a media consulting firm. He has provided campaign strategy and political advertising for Oliver North, Michigan Governor John Engler, and New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman. He is currently the chief strategist for Lamar Alexander for President.

JAMES P. PINKERTON
is a lecturer at the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University and a columnist for Newsday. *He served as a domestic policy adviser in the Bush White House, where he invented the New Paradigm, a strategy for an activist conservative government.*

RALPH REED
is the executive director of the Christian Coalition, an organization "dedicated to mobilizing and training Christians for effective political action." He has consulted on twenty-five congressional campaigns.

I. BOLD INCREMENTALISM AND PUBLIC DECAPITATIONS

PAUL TOUGH: The newly elected Republican Congress has, in the Contract With America, a more specific agenda than any Congress in recent history. But I want to ask you to go beyond the contract, to sketch out some larger themes for the Congress and for the Republican Party in the long term. Is there a single unifying idea that the party should devote itself to?

MIKE MURPHY: We were elected to make fundamental changes in the size of the federal government. That's the idea we campaigned on, and that's where we want to go.

JAMES P. PINKERTON: Yes, we could also lay out a couple of principles. For example, we ought to have an affluence test on government spending and government benefits. To listen to Bill Archer, the Republican Ways and Means Committee chairman, say that we can cut everything except Social Security, which means Ross Perot and the Rockefellers will get their checks while people are getting thrown out on the streets.

FRANK LUNTZ: Wait a second. If we touch Social Security in the next two years, we will give credence to everything that Bill Clinton said about the Republicans—that if we became a majority we were going to mess with Social Security. Philosophically, you're right, and I don't think there's anyone at this table who would disagree with you. In fact, most of us would probably say that Social Security is heading into a crisis. But politically, we can't do anything for at least two years, until we gain the public's confidence.

WILLIAM KRISTOL: Part of being the majority is getting to the point where we can go after entitlements in a big way. Take Roosevelt as an example. He didn't do everything at once. He phased in most of his big programs. Similarly, we are going to have to be both bold in the vision we hold out for America and somewhat prudent—if I can use a discredited Bush Ad-

ministration word—and incremental. We need a kind of bold incrementalism that leads people along step by step, so that a year from now they'll be saying, "They really did cut some programs this year, and we like it."

RALPH REED: The most important thing for the Republicans to do right now, in order to rebuild the trust of the electorate, is simply to do what they said they would do. What they said they would do is honor the Contract With America. The Republicans have got to resist every temptation to get off that message. The great temptation right now, in the euphoria and giddiness after the election, is to begin to think of lots of other ideas, to begin to raise expectations even higher and try to do many other things that weren't in that contract. If the contract is successfully redeemed, then we will have built an enormous reservoir of political capital that we can carry into these other battles. So let's concentrate on the contract for now.

DAVID FRUM: But the contract isn't enough. Look, the 104th Congress has to pass two budgets. There's no way around it. They can either pass budgets that look essentially like the budgets that Congress has passed for the last decade, or they can pass budgets that cut a lot of the programs that deserve to be cut.

MURPHY: Absolutely. If we do not pass a budget that dramatically cuts spending, the kind that the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* will term a catastrophe, and pay that short-term price, then in the long term we're going to be destroyed, because we will have lied to America. We've got political momentum. If we don't use it right away to make significant cuts, we will be failures.

PINKERTON: The question is, where to begin? I heard David Frum say on TV that we ought to start by taking some big obnoxious spending program for the rich and ceremoniously, publicly decapitating it.

KRISTOL: I agree. Farm subsidies.

PINKERTON: Farm subsidies are a perfect candidate. We can't really go to poor black people and throw them off welfare if we haven't first gone to rich white farmers and thrown *them* off welfare.

TOUGH: How far are you going to go with these cuts? Walk me down the streets of Washington, D.C., ten years from now. What's left here?

FRUM: What I hope we'll see is a government whose social-welfare functions are essentially confined to insuring people against the uninsurable catastrophic risks of ordinary life—catastrophic illness, short periods of unemployment, indigence. I also hope that we will have gotten government out of the business of monkeying around in the private economy, which means that virtually all of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Energy will be gone, as well as a lot of the Department of Transportation.

TOUGH: Where does the ax fall first?

FRUM: The big programs, like welfare, Medicaid, and Medicare, will take a little time to get rid of. But there are a lot of little ones that we can get rid of right away. Let's start with President Clinton's favorite, his advanced-technology project. If you have a plan for some technological breakthrough, the government will give you federal money to promote it—on one condition, which is that it can make a profit. In other words, if you can prove that you do not need a government subsidy, the government will give you one. That has to go. Washington is giving $70 million a year to General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler to build an electric car. That goes. When people hear that Republicans are taking money away from big automakers, that will help us politically.

IF WE DON'T USE OUR POLITICAL MOMENTUM TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CUTS RIGHT AWAY, WE WILL BE FAILURES

LUNTZ: And we eliminate funding for the arts, the humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Those cuts we do right away as well.

FRUM: Sure. And here's how I think we should do it. Instead of cutting incrementally—a little here, a little there—I would say that on a single day this summer we eliminate three hundred programs, each one costing a billion dollars or less. Maybe these cuts won't make a big deal of difference, but, boy, do they make a point. And you can do them right away, because, unlike Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare, they're not intellectually challenging.

TOUGH: So we're planning a day of public executions. What goes to the guillotine?

FRUM: The Rural Electrification Administration. The Department of Commerce's program to underwrite the advertising expenses of American corporations in foreign markets. The electric-car project. All programs to promote research on fuel efficiency. The Small Business Administration. Export promotion. Advanced-technology projects. The commercial space program. A lot of the Department of Transportation's demonstration projects. I mean, these things are just embarrassing.

TOUGH: Are farm subsidies in there?

FRUM: Yes. Although that's a much bigger program, and one that's politically a lot harder to cut. A lot of the people who get hurt are our voters. But intellectually, farm subsidies are indefensible. They're pure political pork, and cut-

BALANCING THE BUDGET—WHAT GETS CUT

Most proponents of a balanced budget are understandably vague when it comes to the specific programs that would need to be cut. This is not the case for Representative Gerald Solomon (R., N.Y.), the new chair of the House Rules Committee, who last year issued a proposed budget that would balance income and expenditures by the end of the decade, without raising taxes or cutting Social Security. (The proposal would also allow for a substantial increase in defense spending.) It is, in Representative Solomon's words, "painful as hell." His Balanced Budget Task Force itemized more than five hundred specific cuts to be implemented over the next five years; a few are listed below, along with the amount that their implementation would save from the 1999 federal budget. In total, spending in that year's $1.6 trillion budget would be $221 billion below current Congressional Budget Office projections.

PROPOSED CHANGE	SAVINGS
Implement managed care for Medicaid beneficiaries	$13 billion
Cut Medicaid payments to hospitals	$8.9 billion
End all commodity subsidies (except dairy)*	$6.8 billion
Eliminate Community Development Block Grants	$4.8 billion
Restrict Medicaid coverage for noncitizens	$2.7 billion
Increase civil-service retirement age	$2.5 billion
Cancel plans to build the space station	$2.4 billion
Reduce subsidies for mass transit	$2.2 billion
Adjust food-stamp eligibility	$1.6 billion
Reduce foreign aid to developing countries	$1.3 billion
Cancel all bilateral assistance to Russia	$1.2 billion
Freeze funding for the National Institutes of Health	$1.2 billion
Reduce medical care for veterans	$910 million
Cut funds for child-nutrition programs	$790 million
Abolish the Geological Survey	$710 million
Reduce Amtrak subsidies	$650 million
Cut funding for NEA, NEH, Smithsonian, National Gallery of Art, and CPB in half	$610 million
Cut funding for programs that pay for prenatal and preventive care, immunization, etc.	$590 million
Limit U.S. contributions to the U.N.	$400 million
Abolish the National Service Program	$390 million
Reduce FBI salaries and expenses	$350 million
Freeze funding for social services for the elderly	$110 million
Eliminate the Economic Development Administration	$36 million
Eliminate funding for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts	$24 million
Reduce spending on magnetic-levitation trains	$22 million
Eliminate the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration	$18 million

Representative Solomon's district in upstate New York is known for its thriving dairy industry.

ting them would send a very powerful message.

REED: I think we also need to cut something early on that is dramatic and symbolic and sort of dramaturgical, something that has the same kind of political impact that the air-traffic controllers' strike had for Reagan in 1981. Sure, it may have been a small union, it may have been a relatively insignificant labor dispute in the broad scale of labor history, but it was a significant moment because it demonstrated that Reagan was no longer going to allow the labor unions to tell the government what to do. If you pick a small agency that has a very formidable constituency, it would help pave the way for a lot of these other ventures. The Legal Services Corporation, which provides legal aid for the poor, would be a great one to cut.

II. TWO YEARS IN HELL

TOUGH: Frank, it's the summer of 1995. It's David Frum's day of the long knives. Three hundred programs are executed. Politically, how do you deal with the reaction when he eliminates the Small Business Administration and farm subsidies and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts and student loans—

LUNTZ: He's going to cut student loans?

FRUM: Yup.

LUNTZ: The whole program?

FRUM: Yes.

LUNTZ: Then people are going to cry. Well, David and I are going to go out to Kansas, and I'm going to watch him announce to a group of farmers that he's eliminating the farm-subsidies program. And I'm going to stand far, far away from him.

TOUGH: Won't the public's enthusiasm for these cuts dim once they realize that you're cutting not just welfare programs but programs that are directly benefiting them?

MURPHY: Look, we can't make everybody happy.

KRISTOL: People are so distrustful of

government right now that we may have crossed some sort of magic threshold where people are willing to say, "Look, I'll even give up these programs that allegedly help me, because (a) they don't really help me much and (b) I do understand that we have a deficit and the whole thing is sprawling out of control. I'll give up my chunk of government benefits if everyone else is giving up his."

LUNTZ: That's the key. If everyone is giving up something at the same time, you're okay. But if we make the farmers go first, we're going to get killed in the farm community. We've all got to go together.

REED: According to our polling data, the first thing people want Congress to do is to reform welfare. So if you go out there early and pass a tough and strong and dramatic welfare-reform bill that encourages work and marriage and discourages out-of-wedlock birth, then rhetorically you can say, "Look, we've asked the least among us to sacrifice so that we can have a smaller government, so that we can have a more civil society, so that we don't have this spiraling debt. We can't ask the least among us to get out of the wagon and start pulling unless you get out, too." That's my argument on the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities. How can you go to a single mother in the inner city and say, "You're going to have to start carrying more weight" if you don't also go to the tuxedo and evening-gown crowd and say, "You're going to have to start paying for your own symphony." By starting with welfare, we can turn these cuts into a populist program that will actually work to our advantage.

MURPHY: What I'm advocating, with all due respect to my friend Frank, is that we ban pollsters for two years. Because the only thing the polls are going to tell us is what we can't do. In 1991, the Engler Administration in Michigan cut welfare. They just eliminated general assistance altogether. There was a huge war. Governor Engler cut arts funding. Our fat-cat donors didn't like that at all. Engler got his reelect number down to 19 percent. And last November he won reelection by a landslide. Let's face it: we are in for two years of political hell. There is simply no happy way for us to keep our promises. Yes, we can try to be clever and make sure everybody pays his fair share, but no matter how clever we are tactically, we're going to get a coalition of people really mad about what we're doing. People in focus groups are always very happy about cutting spending and cutting programs—except programs for themselves. So our success is going to be a function of how much courage we show, because we're going to get no credit for years.



LUNTZ: And with all due respect to Mike, what I'm afraid of is the media consultants. They're going to put together a thirty-second ad with no words, just film of some homeless person walking across the street with superimposed words saying, "Republicans did this to you. Now you do it to them." I am afraid of what the media is going to do to us. Look at the *New York Times*. A week ago, there were two pages of pictures of homeless people on Madison Avenue. A week earlier on the front page was a picture of two elderly people rummaging through garbage for food. They're getting ready to blame the Republicans. They run the big story on the GOP's plans right next to the photograph. They haven't linked the two yet, but it's only a matter of time.

TOUGH: But the sort of cuts you're talking about are going way beyond homeless people on Madison Avenue. There are going to be people who can't afford to go to college; small businesses are going to fail.

KRISTOL: Some of these cuts will have some effect, but most of these programs are so ineffectual

Illustrations by Steve Brodner

that not many people are actually going to be hurt very much. The reason we don't like those programs, after all, is that we think they're unfair. If we thought they helped a lot of people, we wouldn't be conservative Republicans.

And you're not just taking money away, you're also saying to the small-business community, "We're going to freeze federal regulations on small business for the next two years." You've now got 90 to 95 percent of the country receiving a check from the government in some way. And they've learned that with that money come all kinds of intrusive regulations on their freedom, on their liberty, and on their right to go out and earn a dollar and raise a family and have their children believe in the values they believe in. So if you don't just cut the money but you also pull back all of this intrusive government regulation, I think you can make it work.

TOUGH: So, Frank, does that reassure you enough for 1996? Do you think we can make those cuts?

LUNTZ: Absolutely. I just don't want to blunder into them. I think the timing is important, and I think we can finesse it.

FRUM: Are you sure you want to use the word "finesse"? Wasn't one of the ways we got into trouble in the late 1980s that we were constantly being, under the Bush Administration, so damn clever?

LUNTZ: I'll explain it in one sentence: I don't want to deliver bad news from a golf course in Kennebunkport. That's what I mean by finesse.





KRISTOL: That's why Frank gets the big bucks.

MURPHY: The tactics, which are what Frank and I do for a living, are just not that important. We have to do something big and unpopular, and it doesn't matter if we do it from a closed steel mill. It's still going to be unpopular. Sure, we ought to announce it from a closed steel mill as opposed to a golf course, but the political reality is that we're going to have to take a whack at the entitlement state, which includes a lot of programs that benefit the middle class. There's no easy, simple strategy to make that fact go away. We have never had our bluff called on spending. Now it's called. We better move fast.

III. STEWING IN BREZHNEVIAN JUICES

TOUGH: Ralph, you said that the place to start cutting is welfare programs. Whether or not that helps the poor in the long run, in the short run there are going to be people who are really going to suffer; there are going to be families who will become homeless and children who are going to be put in orphanages. How much should that concern us?

PINKERTON: The Republicans need to come to grips with the real issue in underclass welfare dependency, which is the value of work. The Republicans ought to say that the transcendent value all Americans can agree on is work.

REED: And marriage and childbirth in marriage.

PINKERTON: Well, I want to go with the lowest common denominator. So I'll just stick with

work. I'm not sure everybody wants to get married; I'm not sure everybody wants to have kids. But everyone wants to work.

LUNTZ: I don't know if that's true anymore. Particularly among black youth in the inner city, a lot of people would not say that work is a basic fundamental desire any longer.

PINKERTON: All right, then let's say the *Republicans* believe in work. Anybody who doesn't believe in work can be a Democrat. An emphasis on work puts some distance between us and the Michael Milkens and the junk-bond traders. In some areas of Republican ideology, there is a sense that the highest value is not work but just making money. We have to say that's wrong, that there is more merit to a person getting up every morning and going to work than someone just inheriting a fortune. Now, I can't imagine a welfare plan that doesn't involve us saying, "If you can work, you have to work. There's no more welfare." But in order to be successful, we're going to have to create some sort of program like Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps to guarantee that although nobody gets a check for doing nothing, nobody is starving.

REED: So we're dismantling the New Deal by creating a new one.

LUNTZ: The government is going to pay for these jobs?

PINKERTON: That's right. We give a job to anyone who wants one. Franklin Roosevelt summoned 8 million people to work during the Depression; we can do the same.

TOUGH: Who runs this program?

PINKERTON: I'd ask someone like Colin Powell or Norman Schwarzkopf. The leadership cadre for a new CCC already exists: all the drill sergeants and NCOs who are being demobilized out of the military. We scoop them up and get them involved. The military used to be a lot of people doing simple tasks. Now the military is a few people doing complicated tasks. Let's go back to a lot of people doing simple tasks, but instead of having them fight wars, let's have them doing peaceful construction or planting trees or unpaving the Everglades. We're going to spend billions of dollars to take up all those levees down in the Everglades. Rather than turning the operation over to some contractor, let's make it labor-intensive and put disadvantaged inner-city youth to work.

KRISTOL: But no one believes that the federal government could run such a program.

PINKERTON: You believe the military can organize large bodies of people to do this sort of thing.

KRISTOL: To fight wars. That's a bit different. Don't you think, practically speaking, that the Republican position on welfare is going to crystallize around the idea of large-scale devolution to the states? Fine, let some governors experiment with a statewide public-works program. Other states would go with a tough cut-them-off approach.

REED: And after ten years you'll know which states have done a better job of encouraging work and discouraging illegitimacy.

PINKERTON: The problem is, we don't have ten years to sort this out.

KRISTOL: Don't you think most people would be thrilled if we got welfare down to the states?

PINKERTON: Well, yes. To use your phrase, many people *would* be thrilled. But there is a national consciousness on this above all other issues. The Republican message has to be totally clear: Nobody is going to starve. Everybody's going to make it. Everybody is going to work. I'm all for devolving education and housing and transportation and road building to the states. I just think that on this one issue of welfare, you need a federal guarantee.

IN SOME AREAS OF REPUBLICAN IDEOLOGY, THERE IS A SENSE THAT THE HIGHEST VALUE IS NOT WORK BUT JUST MAKING MONEY

TOUGH: Does that sound like such a radical idea, for the federal government to guarantee that people don't starve to death? Can't we all agree on that?

KRISTOL: It depends what it means in practice.

PINKERTON: It means we guarantee work. We guarantee honest labor.

KRISTOL: That doesn't guarantee that people won't starve, because people won't show up for work. You cannot in practice have a federal guarantee that people won't starve. Practically, the question is, Are you going to maintain federal entitlement programs or not? My preference is not to have federal entitlement programs but to send them all down to the states, let the states experiment much more, and have private charities take care of people. I don't believe, in fact, that people would starve. We could have federal leadership on these issues that is compassionate and says, "We think this is better for the poor."

REED: We live in a country with the most generous people in the entire world. The problem is that we've centralized charity and welfare, and things have actually gotten worse, not better. People want to return to nongovernmental solutions to poverty. We've got to challenge the churches, the synagogues, and the families to dig deeper and do more.

LUNTZ: Enormous government programs are what the other side offered. The public rejected that. They're ready to embrace us if we just do the things we promised.

PINKERTON: The issue is whether we go further. The issue is how to take apart the institutions that are wrecking this country. If we simply pass the Contract With America, which is essentially a pro-business agenda, and don't go further, then the top half of the economy will be liberated from government control and will prosper and the bottom half will continue to stew in its Brezhnevian juices. And two years from now we'll have an even more radical skew—both electoral and economic—than we did in the 1980s. The moral credibility of capitalism will be further undercut by another round of homeless stories, which will ultimately retard the Republican progress. People will say, "Yeah, we're all getting rich, but what about this poor child here on TV?" I'm not saying that if Republicans take bold steps to help the poor we can immediately expect to harvest a lot of votes from the inner city, but we'll reassure the rest of America that we do, in fact, have a plan for everyone. Right now, when you listen to Jesse Helms and Newt Gingrich, you don't really get the feeling that either man aspires to be a leader for the entire country.

THE BLACK COMMUNITY'S BELIEFS ARE ACTUALLY VERY CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THOSE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

TOUGH: Well, what about those inner-city voters? If you want to represent the whole country, doesn't that mean trying to attract black voters as well as whites?

PINKERTON: There's a significant part of our program that will appeal to African-American voters. We can go to blacks and say, "School vouchers, own your own home, American dream—"

LUNTZ: And that ain't gonna do it. It ain't gonna do it.

TOUGH: Why not?

LUNTZ: In our polling, we find very different priorities in the white and the nonwhite communities. The black community has become very dependent on the government to provide services, and it expects government to get involved and fix America's ills. At the same time, the white community has become particularly hostile about the government and the services it provides.

TOUGH: What does that mean for the Republican Party?

LUNTZ: That the black community is not ripe for picking. The black community's policies and beliefs are actually very closely aligned with the Democratic Party. Blacks are making a rational decision by voting Democratic. If the black community thinks it's better off and the country's better off with a Democratic administration, then its members should vote that way. The rest of America doesn't think so.

IV. BACKSLAPPERS IN A WARRIOR-LIKE FRENZY

TOUGH: Aren't people going to be bothered by photos of poor homeless people showing up at City Hall, saying that they want to work and that they don't have food to feed their families?

FRUM: I agree with Jim that it's dangerous for the party to seem callous. But people's attitudes about the poor have changed significantly in the last decade. People are tired of the constant moaning they hear about the poor. A lot of middle-class taxpayers feel that they're paying more and more for the poor and that the poor are behaving worse and worse. And people are not sure that they're as sympathetic as they used to be. I don't think we should go out of our way to be callous. But there is no way that the Republican Party is going to be able to remain true to its principles without being accused of being callous. In the current environment, being accused of callousness might even be to our advantage. Jack Kemp spent a lot of time trying to come up with ideas that would both be conservative and avoid these accusations, and he failed.

KRISTOL: Republicans obviously should be strategic and clever about how to cut spending. We should be careful to target middle-class subsidies and big-business subsidies as much as we target programs that allegedly benefit the poor. But David's right: no matter what we do, the fairness card will be played against us, and if Republicans get spooked the first time someone tries to demagogue that issue, we will be in deep trouble. Republicans will need to have thick skins to survive the fairness attack that will be launched on us during the course of 1995.

MURPHY: And the reason we have to have thick skins is that the media hates us. We just won a huge victory, but Newt's numbers are 20 to 28 fave/unfave because he gets smeared every day in the press. Today, I saw my third newsweekly cover photo of Gingrich, like, strangling a kid. It's amazing. Qaddafi gets better press. The point is that we can do all this strategic stuff, we can hold great photo ops and all that, and the folks who write the CBS national news are still going to say, "Meet Mrs. X. She's dying tonight because of the Republican plan." If our folks lose it and freak and stampede, then we're going to blow the whole thing. Remember, we have a lot of backslapping nice guys in our caucus who've never been on the firing line. I worked with a

lot of Republican politicians during the 1994 election, and everybody's real tough on the contract until some little old lady comes up to him at the plant gate and yells at him. Then he says, "Well, I don't really mean *all* of it." It's the natural way of politicians to be scared to do radical things. We have to whip our guys up into a warrior-like frenzy, or they're going to back off on day fourteen.

PINKERTON: Well, okay, that's one plan, to take a bunch of natural backslappers and whip them into a warrior-like frenzy. But another strategy that might work is to isolate a few core programs that the federal government will maintain that will guarantee that nobody falls through the cracks. I would rather buck up Mike's backslapping guys by giving them something to be *for*, which means a program like the CCC that guarantees that poor people are not going to starve.

FRUM: You're underestimating the opposition we're going to face. You're suggesting that the only thing that our legislators are afraid of is somebody saying, "There are hungry people, so we've got to have a program for hunger." That's not the accusation. There are going to be students who can't afford college. There are going to be electric cars not being built. There are going to be symphonies closing all over America.

PINKERTON: I'm saying there is a qualitative difference between those accusations. I think Republicans can withstand the symphony closures.

FRUM: The Republicans are much more afraid of angry symphony-goers than they are of people starving to death.

PINKERTON: Maybe so. Which exactly epitomizes the problem. If the Republicans are more afraid of symphony closures than of poor people starving, that says a lot about the Republican Party.

FRUM: It's just political reality. The sort of people who love the opera and support their local arts organizations are also the sort of people who make $100,000 donations to the Republican Party. We're not going to be fighting with uneducated destitute people; we're going to be fighting with the most powerful people in American society.

PINKERTON: But we've got to set some priorities. If this is a country with a sense of compassion, then there ought to be a clearly articulated national policy that says, "We don't want anybody to starve, but we believe in work." We lay it out just like Franklin Roosevelt did on this one narrow issue, and we campaign on that.

MURPHY: We tried this in 1974, after Watergate: "Republicans are people too." It's pure defense. The slogan appeals: "We're for work and we're against starvation." But the *New York Times* is still going to find people who are starving, even if we have WORK NOT STARVATION bumper stickers all over the place.

TOUGH: What if you start making all these cuts and President Clinton goes on television and gives a speech in which he says, "The Republican Party is attacking you. They won't let me give you the money that I want to give you to make your life better." And what if we're in a recession in 1995 and 1996, and people want some sort of economic stimulus? In 1992, George Bush was deemed out of touch for not responding to those calls. If we've got 500,000 people marching on Washington demanding that these cuts be reinstated, is it going to be as easy to ignore that as it is to ignore the *New York Times*?

REPUBLICANS ARE MUCH MORE AFRAID OF ANGRY SYMPHONY-GOERS THAN OF PEOPLE STARVING TO DEATH

MURPHY: Oh, it will be incredibly hard. But if we let the Democrats set the agenda, they're going to grind us up and they'll be back in power. We've got to say that we believe in personal responsibility; we don't believe people need a big government to organize them; people can do it for themselves. I mean, that's why we're Republicans. We've got to say that over and over and over again. It's the only choice we have.

KRISTOL: And Clinton cannot make the speech you're talking about. He totally lacks credibility with the American people. It's an interesting question whether another liberal could make that speech, Dick Gephardt or maybe a fresher face. Mario Cuomo out of retirement a year from now. With a new candidate, the Democrats could get 43 percent of the vote again. And if it's a three- or four-way race in 1996, that could lead to a Democratic victory. I don't think any of us discounts that possibility. In fact, I think Clinton has made a mistake by conceding so many of our premises. I mean, all he's doing now is cutting taxes and cutting spending. He's been harsher on public-housing programs than any conservative I can think of, which is a terrible concession for him to have made. He may have created room for some liberal to stand up and say, "Look, liberalism does have an honorable tradition. Roosevelt helped people. Johnson helped people. We're for civil rights. The Republicans are rich and mean-spirited. I'm going to defend these federal programs." Within the Democratic primary process, that would be a very attractive message from a fresh liberal face. I think it's a message that would defeat Bill Clinton in 1996.

V. TAKING OFF THE JACKBOOTS

TOUGH: So far we've been talking about economic programs. But aren't a lot of voters attracted to the Republican Party because of your cultural agenda? Why aren't you talking about those issues?

REED: We have been. Welfare reform is a cultural and moral issue. It's not an economic issue. If we eliminate welfare altogether, it's not going to balance the budget or get us anywhere near there. It's about encouraging work and discouraging out-of-wedlock birth. It's about ending the chaos and the social dysfunction of our inner cities. There are critics who will try to get the Republican Party to accept the notion that there is a dichotomy between our social agenda and our economic agenda. It's absolutely, totally untrue.

PINKERTON: But our moderator is onto something, which is that we are doing something that the Republican Party didn't used to be good at doing. Instead of hectoring people about values, like we did at the Houston convention in 1992, we are talking about changing people's lives by changing their economic reality. I think the reason that the Republicans are on the edge of success is that we have found a common denominator of economically driven issues that enable people to create their own cultural superstructure.

FRUM: The great conservative hope is contained in a phrase that goes back thirty years: "In a conservative country, the libertarian method yields traditionalist results." Go through Ralph Reed's mailing list, and you'll find an awful lot of old Wallace voters, people who stood for trying to achieve conservative results through authoritarian methods. And a lot of them still favor authoritarian methods—maybe not authoritarian with jackboots, but authoritarian nonetheless. The great contribution Ralph Reed has made is that he has convinced a lot of those people that a libertarian approach is going to achieve the same results, and that it's an approach we can run and win on.

REED: I think those people, by the way, ended up in David Duke's file, not mine.

PINKERTON: Well, there were a lot of them. There were 10 million of them in 1968.

FRUM: And they aren't all horrible people. I think that one of the reasons the Republican Party now is such a disciplined organization, certainly as compared with its competition, is that everyone—even people with strong cultural agendas—has agreed to hope for the moment that we can use libertarian means to achieve traditionalist ends.

PINKERTON: The question is whether Ralph is going to be able to go to all those people who originally paid attention to Pat Robertson because he's a faith healer who

THE VALUES AGENDA: THEN AND NOW

FROM PATRICK BUCHANAN'S SPEECH TO THE 1992 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION:

We stand with [President Bush] for freedom-of-choice religious schools, and we stand with him against the amoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women.

We stand with President Bush for right to life, and for voluntary prayer in the public schools, and against putting American women in combat. And we stand with President Bush in favor of the right of small towns and communities to control the raw sewage of pornography that pollutes our popular culture.

My friends, this election is about much more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe; it is about what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.

FROM POLITICALLY INCORRECT, *BY RALPH REED (1994)*

The pro-family movement's political rhetoric has often been policy-thin and value-laden, leaving many voters tuned out. Values are very important to voters, but they are not the highest rung on a communication ladder.

The most urgent challenge for the pro-family movement is to develop a broader issues agenda. To win at the ballot box and in the court of public opinion, it must speak to the concerns of average voters in the areas of taxes, crime, government waste, health care, and economic security. Financial pressure on families must be addressed by the pro-family movement because it affects them as adversely as cultural decay.

In sports, if the defensive team is preventing the ground game, the offense should pass the ball. Likewise, in politics there is nothing wrong and everything prudent in changing the game plan at halftime if necessary to win. The key is not to become wedded to the playbook but to win the game.

averts hurricanes and predicts apocalypses and say to them, "Look, your real friends in this world are Wall Street tycoons, because trickle-down economics is the only kind of economics left." If he can sell that argument, that the haves and the have-nots share a common ethos, then the Republicans really will be the majority party forever.

MURPHY: What the pundits here in Washington don't understand is that these cultural issues are important to people. People see the whole concept of right and wrong eroding in this country. They see a kind of nihilistic society in which "values" is a dirty word and everything is okay. And that scares them. They want it to change. Politicians are afraid to talk about right and wrong because they are told by the intellectual culture that right and wrong isn't an issue. But voters are demanding that folks start addressing personal responsibility. Our party ought to address those things.



KRISTOL: As part of a broader conservative vision for the future, it's very important to emphasize that we have concrete ideas about how to revitalize civic society and how to strengthen families. But I tend to agree that the way in which this is reconciled politically is by making the political agenda mostly a neolibertarian, federalizing, get-government-off-our-backs agenda, and then letting communities and families, with some encouragement from the government but without authoritarian coercion, work on the reconstitution of civil society.

REED: That's right. You can't be part of a movement for limited government without accepting limits to what government can do. That's one of the things that I think separates conservatives from liberals. We genuinely believe that some of the greatest work, the most productive and fruitful work that will be done in society to improve people's lives, will be done by institutions other than the government.

LUNTZ: And that's why this is the beginning of a Republican majority, and a relatively long-term one. When you can have the lion and the lamb lie down together, when the Perot voter and the Christian conservative find more that unites them than divides them, you're looking at 55, 57 percent of America that is behind our program.

TOUGH: What about the possibility of a third party? Is that a threat to this coalition?

PINKERTON: I think that it is a threat, especially if the Republicans fall into the rut of complacency and smugness, looking after the top half and letting the bottom half sink into Gephardtian resentment. It's a more difficult challenge for the Republicans than simply doing a good job. Because in an era of post-party factionalization, there is not a lot stopping some ambitious egomaniac with a billion dollars from saying, "I don't care if I have any issues or not, I just want to be president." I think we're going to see a whole slew of them: Ross Perot/Silvio Berlusconi types, out there running just for the hell of it. This is how all our plans for coalitions and cleverness could come crashing down.

FRUM: I'm a lot less impressed by this threat. There aren't that many people in America with a billion dollars and an out-of-control ego.

PINKERTON: You haven't looked at the Forbes 400 list recently.

KRISTOL: But they won't get any votes unless Republicans fail. If Republicans succeed as the congressional majority, the chance of a third party is diminished radically. If Republicans fail on Capitol Hill, then you could have genuinely chaotic, postmodernist, deconstructionist politics in America. The interesting thing about the 1994 election is that by conventional analysis, it shouldn't have happened. It was an old-fashioned party election. It looked like elections from the 1890s, for God's sake. Maybe it's an aberration, maybe it can't last. Maybe a year from now we'll be back into chaos and into Perot squared. But maybe it really was a decisive moment and successful governance by the Republican majority will move us toward a generational realignment. At this point, I think those are basically the two alternatives: Republican success or political chaos. ■

FOR SALE: USED MARXISM

Castro's "grandchildren" discover the glory of the dollar

By Marc Cooper



Every weekday morning, knots of onlookers cluster along the curb of Calle Ocho, between First and Fifth Avenues, in the upscale Havana neighborhood of Miramar. They come to gape at the stream of mirror-buffed Nissans and late-model Toyota vans and Land Cruisers jockeying for parking space outside the offices of the giant state holding companies CIMEX and CUBALSE, and the communications behemoth INTERTEL, as well as a dozen other similar structures. Platoons of self-appointed "guardians" direct the vehicles to open parking spots and monitor them throughout the day, making sure that the owners suffer none of the indignities that commonly plague Cuban motorists: stripped gas tanks, tilched side-view mirrors, smashed windows. For his trouble, a guardian will pull in as much as $10 per day, roughly twice the average monthly salary of a Cuban surgeon.

The groupies along Calle Ocho, most of whom work in nearby government offices, pay little attention to the lavishly restored Spanish colonial mansions that line the street. They're too busy admiring the parade of stylish secretaries in Dior and Hermès and the young men flaunting Ray-Bans, cellular phones, leather briefcases, gold watches, and neatly pleated gabardine slacks. As I stood on the corner of Calle Ocho and Third Avenue one morning last fall, I recognized Jorge Le Cuano, the director of CUBALSE (the acronym stands for "Cuba at the Service of Foreigners"), as he whizzed past in his chauffeur-driven sedan. "I feel like I'm in a different country when I come here," said one longtime Calle Ocho watcher as her gaze followed Le Cuano's car down Third Avenue.

Calle Ocho is Cuba's Wall Street, headquarters for many of the country's two hundred or so proto-capitalist enterprises, all of which have been granted the right to do business by Fidel Castro's government. The neighborhood is also the native habitat of the Yummies, Cuba's new class of young upwardly mobile Marxists. Whether they work as managers in one of Calle Ocho's Mexican, Spanish, Canadian, German, or Dutch companies or serve as functionaries in the Cuban state enterprises that collaborate with the multinationals, the Yummies see themselves as the missing link between Cuba's struggling revolution and the New World Order.

When I arrived in Havana last fall, Cuba was staggering through the fourth year of its post-Soviet "Special Period." The Cuban economy had shrunk by 40 percent between 1989 and 1993, and the indices of decay were abundant. More than half of Cuba's heavy industry was sitting idle, lacking the oil, raw materials, and spare parts formerly provided by Moscow. The fleets of aging Russian-built automobiles that once clogged downtown intersections had mostly disappeared, victims of a severe gasoline shortage.

Marc Cooper, *author of* Roll Over Che Guevara: Travels of a Radical Reporter, *published last year by Verso.*

Photograph © 1994 by Adam Rockfeld. Reprinted with permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

and were replaced by swarms of Chinese-made bicycles. During my previous visits to Cuba, schoolchildren would surround me on the streets of colonial Old Havana, genially begging Bic pens or pencils. This time, however, they demanded, with greater urgency, dollar bills and—more portentously—food. Prostitutes paraded openly in the lobbies of tourist hotels. For the first time in anyone's memory, food was scarce (one afternoon, I watched as a man on a street corner pounded grapefruit pulp to produce a "meat substitute"), and the minds of Havana's two million residents seemed to be fixed more intently than ever on one thing—escape.

To most Cubans, *escapar* means simply improvising a way around the privations imposed by the regime: hooking home power lines to those of an important state office, for example, or making a black-market food connection in order to supplement monthly rations, or earning a handful of U.S. dollars by selling counterfeit cigars to credulous foreigners. For others, escape is a scholarship at a foreign university or an invitation to lecture abroad. And those unable to afford any escape other than that offered by a plywood raft often take to the sea and head across the Straits of Florida, as some thirty thousand Cubans did in the brief three-week period last summer before President Clinton (and Castro) reimposed the immigration blockade.

But for a small number of Cubans, there is the refuge of Calle Ocho. Just as Fidel Castro the guerrilla leader once established "liberated zones" in the Sierra Maestra mountains as the embryos of a new socialist society, today Fidel Castro the reformer has created the germ of a new capitalist society inside the old Communist one. Calle Ocho is a thoroughfare as rich in irony as it is in dollars. For more than three decades, Cubans could utter the words "Calle Ocho" only in derision or in secret, because it was also the name of the main street in Miami's Little Havana, headquarters of the wealthy, virulently counterrevolutionary exile community. No one knows why the Cuban state chose Havana's Calle Ocho to house its own burgeoning private sector. But the symmetry is not lost on ordinary Cubans, who use "Calle Ocho," whether in Miami or Havana, as a synonym for both greed and glamour. There is one difference, however. The mandarins of Miami's Little Havana, derisively dubbed *gusanos*, "worms," remain highly unpopular in Cuba, whereas the executives of Havana's Calle Ocho elicit a more ambivalent mix of scorn and fascination, rather like the allure that heavyweight boxing champions once held for many Cubans.

"The Yummies are the people who will manage the Cuban economy, and therefore the nation, in the very near future," said Justo Vasco, a fifty-two-year-old journalist and erstwhile adviser to Comecon, the now defunct Communist common market. "Their promotion to the highest levels is only a matter of time. They are very well prepared. The current economic crisis is serving as their capitalist training ground."

The comandantes of Calle Ocho are called *los fulanos*, "the fellas," a nickname that conceals a deeper meaning: *fula* is also the slang term for American dollars; hence, a *fulano* is one who has dollars. Dollars were once considered the currency of the enemy; until 1993, the mere possession of American currency by a Cuban was an act of "antisocial behavior," punishable by a term at Boniato Prison. Commerce in dollars was restricted to small, hotel-based, hard-currency stores that sold luxury items to foreign tourists, the resident diplomatic corps, and expatriate Cubans visiting from abroad. But as Cuba's economic crisis worsened in the late Eighties, and the government's hunger for hard currency intensified, state-run dollar-only shops began to appear all over the country, selling everything from bread to basketballs. Most Cuban citizens were still barred, in theory, from entering these outlets of plenty, but as time passed the Communist leadership increasingly turned a blind eye, allowing a small merchant class to evolve in the margins of the dollar economy. Roughly twenty-five thousand Cubans (in a population of eleven million) began conducting business in dollars.

This evolution accelerated when the Cuban government legalized the possession of dollars in August 1993. Seemingly overnight, the dollar reworked the social landscape that the Cuban revolution took nearly thirty-five years to mold. Cuban society was rudely divided between those who have access to dollars, and the comforts they buy, and those who do not. Any Cuban can now walk into a dollar store and buy what he or she wants, and those Cubans fortunate enough to work within the dollar-based service sector can now legally keep their hard-currency tips, which even in the smallest amounts buy infinitely more than peso salaries. This dynamic has set Cuba's revolution on its head. Those who excelled at the best high schools, such as Havana's Vladimir Lenin Vocational School, majored in socialist planning at university, and moved into low-level government posts now find themselves consigned to dead-end jobs at poverty wages. Meanwhile, the hustlers, fixers, and "social deviants" of yesteryear are emerging as Cuba's most privileged class. "It's like living in a nightmare," said Eduardo, a fifty-two-year-old mechanic. "What good to me is my revolutionary theory if I have to buy everything in dollars?" Until President Clinton cut off the flow of dollars during last summer's raft crisis, even poor Cubans could legally receive as much as $1,200 a year in remittances from relatives in the United States. (Now expatriate remittances must pass through a third country—usually the Bahamas—to get home to Cuba, a costly and cumbersome procedure that further profits the Yummie fixer class.)

"In the socialism of dollars, everything is beautiful, clean, pleasant, and agreeable," said Angel Tomas Gonzalez, the forty-nine-year-old former deputy editor of *Juventud Rebelde*, the Communist Youth (UJC) newspaper. "For a Cuban with dollars in his pocket, socialism is nothing more than a political speech." The dollar economy has become so entrenched in Cuba that one even runs into it at Havana's Museum of the

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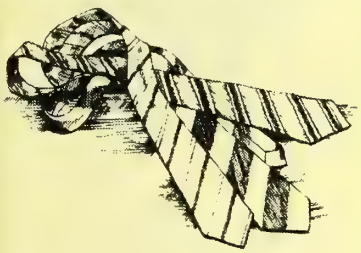
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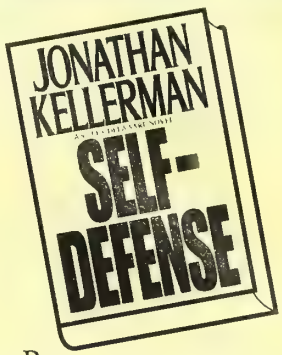
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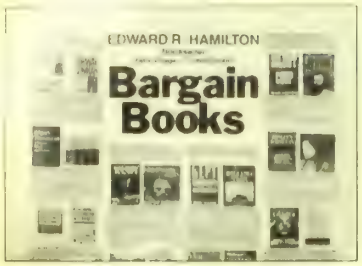


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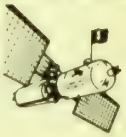
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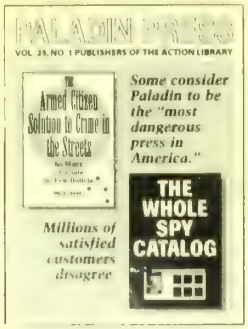


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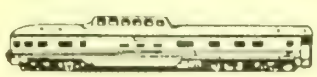
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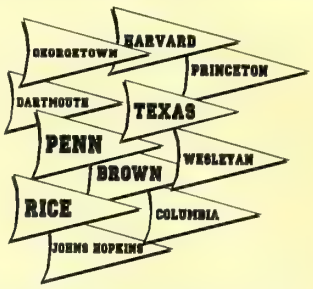
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Revolution, the citadel of Castroite orthodoxy. There is no charge to view the cabin cruiser *Granma*, in which Castro sailed from Mexico to Cuba in 1956 to begin the rebellion, or the planes and armored cars that propelled the rebels to victory three years later. But when I toured the museum recently, my host, a sixty-five-year-old novelist, wanted to buy me a set of Che Guevara photos on sale at the gift shop, and was shocked



to find that the clerk would not sell them to him. "Prices are only in dollars," she announced curtly. (Not that anyone in Cuba, except a dollar-packing foreigner, would be interested in Che photos nowadays anyway.)

The cult of Che Guevara could hardly be more out of place than along Calle Ocho, home to CIMEX, the public-sector holding company that oversees growth industries. Housed inside a complex of renovated seignorial residences, CIMEX is presided over by the mighty Council of State, the executive branch of the Cuban government. Without the approval of CIMEX's board, the permits and signatures necessary to do business in Cuba are impossible to obtain. CUBALSE, CIMEX's powerful sister organization, occupies the bunker-like facility next door that once housed the Soviet Economic Mission. Cadres of the Interior Ministry, the law-and-order arm of the regime, hold senior positions in both companies. The army, too, has gotten into the act. The Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces created a company called Gaviota ("Seagull"), which has turned a number of former military resorts into profitable tourist hotels. The three conglomerates, which, in cooperation with their foreign partners, reported earnings of more than $740 million in 1993, are supervised directly by politburo member Comandante Osmany Cienfuegos, brother of Camilo Cienfuegos, Cuba's most revered revolutionary martyr after Che Guevara.

Revenues from tourism (which are still tiny by American standards, amounting to only a fraction of Connecticut's annual earnings from tourism) provide a third of Cuba's hard-currency income. But *turismo* is not the only sector of the economy undergoing rebirth. Joint ventures with foreign companies are opening up thousands of acres for the exploitation of oil, nickel, and other valuable metals. European traders are again interested in Cuban sugar and cotton. But this transformation, which has also witnessed the wholesale collapse of Cuba's inefficient industrial base, has not gone unnoticed by those left behind, some of whom have observed that the reorientation of the Cuban economy toward the export of raw materials (rather than the manufacture of domestic goods) is a textbook case of neocolonial dependent development, the system that Castro's 1959 revolution supposedly overthrew.

I drove up to Calle Ocho from my downtown hotel one morning to spend a day with Alvaro Rodriguez, a typical representative of the Yummie elite. (Rodriguez agreed to meet with me only if I concealed his real name.) A burly, magnetic man in his mid-forties, Rodriguez grew up in Havana, the son of a bus driver who joined the underground opposition to dictator Fulgencio Batista. By age twenty-three Alvaro had become a trusted Fidelista diplomat. Within five years, he had moved on to a post as an adviser in the Foreign Ministry. After a stint in the Ministry of Labor, he managed a string of state stores that sold goods to tourists for dollars. Now he is the managing director of the Cuban branch of a European-owned machinery company.

Alvaro received me in pressed khakis, a florid silk sport shirt, and Gucci loafers. A Rolex dangled from his left wrist. His office was air-conditioned to an icy chill; the furniture was classic Holiday Inn. He abruptly informed me that we were invited to lunch at Varadero Beach, the seaside watering hole of the Calle Ocho crowd, sixty miles to the east. His new wife, Sarita, twenty years his junior, came along for the ride carrying a Louis Vuitton handbag and wearing a gold Playboy bunny pendant. With a tankful of gas purchased at the dollar-only service station next to the Hotel Riviera, Alvaro's Nissan Sentra sped us past the motley flotilla of Soviet-built Ladas and Moskvitches and the Buicks and Oldsmobiles of pre-1959 vintage. (Most Cubans lucky enough to own a car have had to garage their vehicles for the last three years, ever since Russia cut Cuba's petroleum allotment by half, driving up the price of gasoline to almost $4 a gallon, twice the base monthly wage.) I noticed that the highway billboards that for years exhorted drivers to revolutionary steadfastness had been covered over with the green and white slogans of the United Colors of Benetton, the red and white logo of DHL, and ads for a new cellular-phone service called Cubacel.

A little more than an hour later, Varadero peninsula came into view. The jewel of the national tourist industry and a perennial favorite of foreign literati (Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana* exploits it as a backdrop), Varadero, with its crystalline waters, endless white-sand beaches, and immaculate avenues, is the favorite escape for wealthy Cubans. (The only reminder that the visitor is still in an authoritarian country is the presence of heavily armed military guards patrolling the hotel parking lots.) Yachts and cabin cruisers clogged the palm-lined Kawama Canal, which runs parallel to the highway. The hotels rising in the distance, behind rows of red-roofed stucco bungalows, are all managed jointly by foreign companies: LTI of Germany; Super Club of Jamaica; Guitart, and Sol-Melia of Spain. We

Photograph by David Symmonds

passed the Marlin Marina (where $250 will charter a four-person fishing boat for the day) and the Pirates Cove cabaret, and then approached a string of five-star hotels: the Sol Palmeras, the Melia Las Americas, and, finally, the Melia Varadero.

The rain-forested, open-roofed lobby of the Melia Varadero brought to mind a Hyatt Regency. We wandered through an atrium to the dining room, which overlooked a massive swimming pool complete with its own sandy beach. "If you came here blindfolded and then opened your eyes," Alvaro asked playfully, "would you ever guess you were in Cuba?"

We might as well not have been. In a city where even the top tourist hotels offer buffets of suspicious-looking cold cuts and rubbery fried eggs, the fare in Varadero—boiled lobster, grilled swordfish, filet mignon—seemed right out of Malibu, as did Alvaro's lunchtime discourse, which extolled the "flexible" organization that Cuban mixed enterprises are now allowed to have, "freeing us from the slow machinery of our socialist state. One of the biggest problems in Cuban industry," he said, "is that usually it is very hard to fire a worker. There's always the union in between, the Communist Youth, too many layers of protection. But in mixed enterprises, personnel management is more flexible. It's easier to fire workers. In return, the worker gets a salary about 15 percent above the national scale. We also pay for better food for the worker, offer better work, clothes, and in some cases the workers are given a monthly *jabita*, a little bag, full of hard-to-get items like soap and razor blades."

As Alvaro explained the rules governing mixed companies in Cuba, it became clear that the big winner was the Cuban state. The government provides workers for each foreign enterprise and charges the employer a monthly salary in dollars. A waiter in a tourist hotel, for example, costs a company about $350 a month, most of which is pocketed by the state. The worker receives, from the state, the base salary of a Cuban waiter: 192 pesos a month, or about $2.

"How much do you earn?" I asked Alvaro over dessert.

"My salary is 350 pesos a month," he answered. "My employer pays the Cuban state $706 a month for me. And I get the rest."

"Less than four dollars a month," I calculated aloud. "How do you buy a Rolex on that pay?"

"My foreign employer understands the situation here and takes care of my needs," he said.

"You mean he gives you a packet of dollars under the table each month."

"Obviously. For the moment, there's no other way."

His candor prompted another line of questioning. "I know you support the Cuban government," I said, "but its future is unstable. What do you tell foreign investors who are contemplating coming in to Cuba but are wary of the risks?"

"Cuba is the safest place in the world for foreign investment," he answered. "We already made our socialist revolution, defended it for thirty years, and now we're opening up. Your best bet is right here. Because no matter what happens, life will become easier for foreign investors. No one is going to expropriate your factory. Even if our government falls—and I don't think it will—it would mean that socialism has failed. So whatever comes next is not going to be unfriendly to business."

The bill for our three-person lunch—chicken, beer, dessert—came to just under $100. Alvaro paid with a crisp C-note. "What everyone wants is to live well," Alvaro said. "One way you can do that nowadays is by working in a mixed enterprise. There are those who criticize us, envy us our success. What do I say to them? Well, we tried to create the New Socialist Man here in Cuba using moral incentives, the most beautiful idea in the world. But you can't eat ideas. So I'm trying to do what is best for society *and* for me. Right now that means sell, sell, and sell some more."

Alvaro had planned one more stop. At nightfall, we pulled up to a remodeled colonial mansion in West Havana known as La Maison. Around a splendidly decorated foyer, a half-dozen specialty boutiques were open for business to those who could pay $11,000 for a gold Rolex or $420 for a leather billfold by Bugatti. We entered a broad outdoor patio dwarfed by a towering *flamboyan* tree and lit by underwater light from the swimming pool. The audience, other Yummies and a smattering of tourists, had plunked down at least $10 to get in the door and as much as $65 for a bottle of Havana Club rum and a six-pack of Coca-Cola. We'd arrived, mercifully, between the fashion show and the magic show. Alvaro's wife was crestfallen over missing the fashion show, and I professed my distaste for magic. We had one round of rum at $5 a shot and decided to call it an evening.

Before leaving, Alvaro and I stopped in at the La Maison bathroom. A somnolent, middle-aged woman sat at a table near the door, a plate full of quarters and dollars before her. As we left the bathroom, she tapped the plate and called out, "*Señores!* A tip, please!" Neither of us had any coins. From my pocket I pulled out a Cuban one-peso bill. Recognizing its scarlet color, the woman wrinkled her nose in scorn and brushed it away, as if I were handing her something I had fished out of the urinal.

Alvaro laughed, and we walked on.

No individual better typifies the next generation of Cuban leaders than Roberto Robaina, the handsome, thirty-eight-year-old foreign minister. As the socialist bloc crumbled in the late Eighties, and the political aftershocks began to reverberate in Cuba, Robaina, then head of the Communist Youth, took it upon himself to carry out a one-man Cultural Revolution. He had caught the national fancy in the early Eighties by becoming the first UJC leader in a long time to act on his revolutionary rhetoric: he served a tour of combat with Cuban troops in Angola. He also won the hearts of many Cubans, and not just the young, by supporting greater freedom of travel.

Robaina rejects the traditional white guayabera shirt preferred by Cuba's bureaucratic elite in favor of

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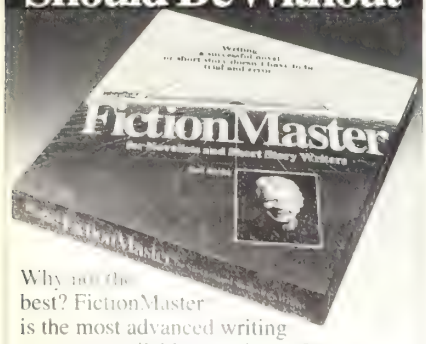
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the *Miami Vice* look. In loafers without socks, linen blazers with rolled-up sleeves, and pastel T-shirts, Robaina has brought a fresh approach to the recruitment of new supporters to the revolution. Castro assigned Robaina the prestigious task of organizing Cuba's political rallies and celebrations. At one massive rally I witnessed a few years back at the soccer stadium Castro built to host the 1991 Pan-American Games, Robaina delivered the brief keynote speech, concluding with a thundering call to arms. "We are not seeking to change socialism!" he roared. "We are seeking to *perfect* it!" The crowd cheered wildly as four gigantic video screens flashed images of Cuban teenagers partying, dancing, and strutting in skimpy bikinis and cutoff blue jeans. Red and green laser lights raked the rally as the celebrants began to snake through the streets, swaying to a pounding beat. Gone were the ideological sermons, the geriatric "rallies." To be a young Communist in Robaina's Cuba required a willingness to gyrate your hips and exercise your vocal cords by screaming, "Fidel-i-*tá!*"—a chant promising fidelity to *el Máximo*.

A story—possibly apocryphal—circulates in Havana. One New Year's Eve a few years ago, Castro found himself in the passenger seat of a jeep on a midnight tour of Havana. At the wheel was Robaina, who told his boss that he had something important to show him. The tour was sparse on narration. Robaina broke the silence only to point out the ubiquitous clumps of teenagers on the corners and porches of the dimly lit city. After an hour, an impatient Fidel turned to Robaina and said, "So what? All I've seen is a bunch of kids hanging out."

Robaina reportedly stopped the car dead and said, "Exactly! The kids here have nothing to do. I wanted you to see it with your own eyes."

By the next morning, the story goes, Castro had allocated more than a million dollars to Robaina's Communist Youth, enabling the organization to open up a nationwide network of discotheques.

In the next few years, Robaina and his friends came to preside over a lot more than dance clubs. Robaina himself was promoted to foreign minister in 1993. He is now one of only a handful of political leaders who enjoy any degree of political autonomy. While still proclaiming loyalty to socialism, Robaina and his followers are clearly the heirs to a post-Castro Cuba, provided they can survive the transition.

Robaina has adroitly transformed the UJC from a cadre of true believers into the Cuban equivalent of the Jaycees. Joining the Communist Youth and participating in its activities used to be the best way to win a place in Cuba's elite technical and military academies, such as the Polytechnic Institute of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, which, in turn, could lead to a lifelong post in the government bureaucracy. But getting into the right schools no longer matters much in a country where a state employee earns only as much as a Calle Ocho guardian. Fortunately for the young and ambitious, the Communist Youth organization serves as the point of entry for the new capitalist economy. In addition to the discos, the UJC directly controls a number of small businesses, most of them open-air street cafés that cater to a Cuban clientele. The state supplies these cafés with luxury foods, including ice cream and soft drinks, originally earmarked for tourist hotels. "The idea is to get a job managing one of the UJC cafés," said Nestor, a twenty-two-year-old physics student at the University of Havana. "From there you can move right up into the Diplo-stores, where you get to deal with hard currency. From there, it's only a matter of time until you get a job at a joint enterprise."

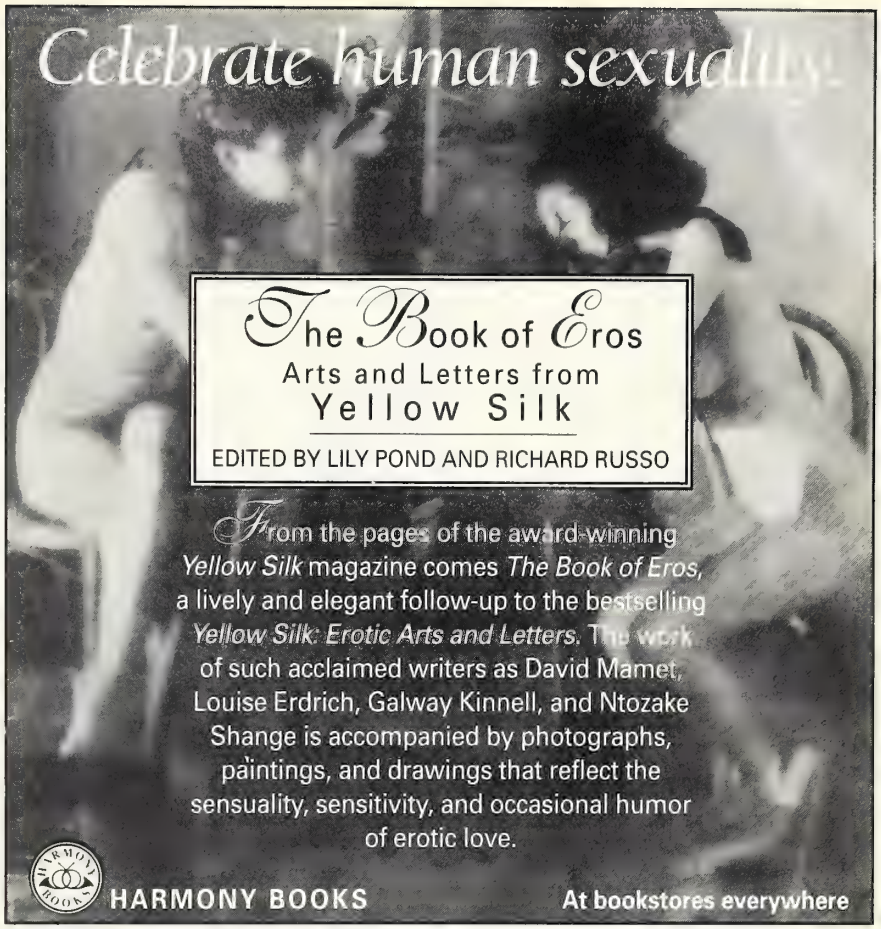
The Diplo-stores are the network of state-run or franchised retail outlets that boomed in the late 1980s. Two or three years' service in a dollars-only Diplo will prepare the young manager for a future in one of Calle Ocho's high-powered firms. Ambitious young men—very few women make the cut—can train not only in a Diplo-bakery, Diplo-supermarket, or Diplo-computer store but also at the Diplo-golf course or at the new Diplo-veterinary center, whose brochure boasts the best med-

ical attention, surgical facilities, and pharmacy available to the Cuban pet, as well as a "Zoo-hotel," with private rooms and patios and a grooming salon under the direction of "famed stylist Alfredo Sanz"—all owned or licensed by the Communist state.

The night after my visit to La Maison, I went with two friends, Enrique and Miguel, both writers in their mid-forties, to the most popular nightspot in Havana. The year-old El Aljibe is located a quarter-mile from Calle Ocho, on Seventh Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street. A gentrified version of a typical Cuban country inn, it's the only place I've been in Cuba with valet parking. "You have to be careful where you park tonight," the attendant told us. "Lots of people are stealing tires to use for rafts."

Inside, an elderly maître d' showed us to a side table. Our group was the only one without a cellular phone prominently displayed. Enrique and Miguel immediately took inventory of the tables around us: A clump of Communist Youth officials sat next to us. Across the room one of Robaina's top advisers presided over a table of casually dressed Yummies. Behind us, in white duck pants and a tropical-print shirt, sat Carlos García, vice president of the Cubanacán state holding company, which owns hotels, taxi fleets, and dozens of other hard-currency enterprises. He was entertaining a table of tanned American businessmen. The other fifty or so diners were groups of older bureaucrats dressed in traditional guayaberas or parties of "Nissan kids," the sons and daughters of the colonels and generals of the Interior Ministry and State Security.

The mood at my table was grim. Enrique and Miguel, both lifelong party members, had recently "escaped" their low-paying state jobs and were now making an adequate but modest living—Enrique by translating for Mexican publishers, Miguel as a freelancer for European newspapers. But neither could stomach the changes that were transforming their country. "Cuba has be-



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come like the Third World countries we studied in college," Enrique said derisively. "Like Egypt, but worse. In Egypt no one ever had the illusions and hopes we had."

We were interrupted by the waiter, who told us what was available. There was no printed menu, no stated price. If you could even think of eating here, you weren't concerned with how much it would cost. Miguel and Enrique knew I'd pay; otherwise their meager dollar reserves would be depleted.

"When dollars were legalized here," Enrique continued, "the class divisions in Cuba were clearly demarcated. Not in the Marxist sense of what you produce but in the American sense of how you live. I'm middle-class not because I am a writer but because I can earn $100 a month. A neurosurgeon is lumpen because his salary is only $5. Back in April I ran out of money. So I rented my car to a Swiss film crew who gave me $160 for one week. I was *upper* middle-class that week."

At the mention of social class, Miguel did another quick survey around the house and concluded that all three classes of Cuban prostitutes were represented at El Aljibe's tables tonight. There were the fair-skinned, fine-featured "shopping girls," who command the highest prices; the *mambizas*, the black and mulatto women who cater to the tastes of Spanish and Italian tourists; and finally the common *jineteras*, "horsewomen," ready to mount any tourist at discount prices.

"You see this," Miguel said, nodding toward a couple of peroxide-blonde teenagers in short-shorts partying at a table of Mexican tourists, "and you see why the poor people of this country feel betrayed by Fidel Castro." Miguel told me his personal story of moral and political disillusionment. As a lifelong Communist, he was called before an emergency meeting of his party cell late last year. "I was told, '*Compañero*, since you now earn your living by selling articles abroad, and since you are paid in dollars, we think you should now pay your [Communist] Party dues in dollars as well,'" Miguel recounted. "I told them, '*Cojones!* I

am a Communist, and I'm not going to pay you in imperialist dollars.'" The argument lasted six hours. In the end, Miguel relented, but only under one condition: he would pay the party $4 a month if the minutes of that meeting made note of the fact that he was paying "in the currency of the enemy" and under protest. "And do you know what?" Miguel asked with a bitter smile. "Those shit-eaters accepted the deal. The Communist Party of Cuba was now demanding dues in dollars, and they couldn't care less how they had to get them. And that's the dilemma of the Cuban people. Fidel fucked them with Communism. Now he's fucking them again with his own brand of capitalism."

For a brief historical moment, at the beginning of 1994, a more popular, if not democratic, version of capitalism flowered alongside the state-controlled monopolies. When Castro legalized the dollar last year and simultaneously allowed people in certain service and craft jobs to go into business for themselves, thousands of Cubans mistakenly thought a commercial green light had been flashed to the population in general. Some five thousand private, family-run *paladares* (living-room restaurants) began to serve a cheap and varied menu. In the twilight zone between the forbidden and the tolerated, some grass-roots entrepreneurs began catering lunches to embassies and foreign companies. For the first time in their history, Cubans could dial a number and have pizza or fried chicken delivered. Along San Rafael Boulevard, Havana's pedestrian walkway, steak sandwiches sold briskly at a dollar each.

But on April 11, 1994, after protests from hard-line parliamentarians, Castro issued a decree shutting down unlicensed street vendors. During that fleeting historical parenthesis, Castro saw something that terrified him: an expanding market made the state apparatus even more superfluous. Whatever a Cuban earned from a government job could be matched in half a day of street selling.

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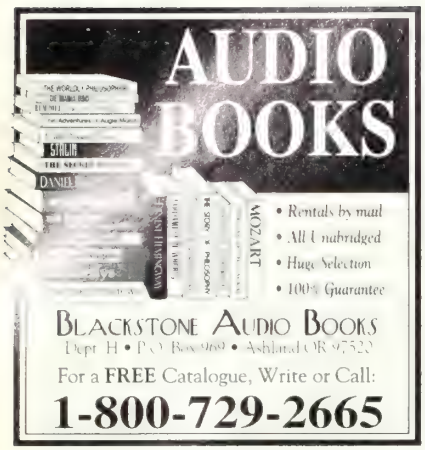
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NOTES FOR "AT SIXES AND SEVENS"
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

FIVE-LETTER WORDS: f. su(n)e; 2. [illegible]; 3. *; 4. ye-yes; 5. homonym; 6. two mngs.; 7. two mngs.; 8. co-bra; 9. c.e.l.k. (rev.); 10. fa(m)t; 11. free(t); 12. [illegible] SIX-LETTER WORDS: a. mob(il)ize*; b. [illegible]; c. (s)nicap(e); d. [illegible]; e. nigh-t; f. two mngs.; g. her (h)ald; h. [illegible]; i. hidden; j. as crim(e)* SEVEN-LETTER WORDS: a. sign of I; b. homonym; c. an (jaun-t); d. two mngs.; e. [illegible], f. again* [illegible]; g. pe(at.)ers; h. st(said*)s; i. can-ched; j. hear-say TWELVE-LETTER WORDS: a. [illegible]; b. extra-p(o)lates; c. [illegible]; d. candles-ticks.

SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 146). JAMES (L.) DEFAZIO—HIS WRITER'S APT. I . . . have an enormous admiration for the style of Henry Mencken. He went at his targets with shillelaghs, fungo bats, and bung starters; he had a way of honing his carving knife with a couple of extra licks, just for dramatic effect, before he started slicing some suckling pig.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 147, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by March 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the April issue. Winners of the January Double Acrostic (No. 145) are Fredrica Widell, Oceanside, New York, Hugh Mclaughlin, Stone Mountain, Georgia, and Erik Jens, Los Angeles, California.



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Many Cubans trace last summer's raft exodus from Cuba to the crackdown on commerce the previous spring. The spectacle of the police shutting down living-room restaurants while Communist hierarchs opened hard-currency tourist hotels robbed ordinary Cubans of their last rational hope for reform. Castro clearly had no moral qualms about capitalism, only political ones. If there was to be capitalism in Cuba, Castro had apparently concluded, it would be à la carte capitalism, in which the Communist leadership would choose from a menu of market reforms.

Only fifteen miles to the east of Calle Ocho languishes the ramshackle, weather-beaten fishing village of Cojimar. The socialism of the peso, rather than the dollar-Communism of the Yummies, governs here. Cojimar's streets are rutted and potholed, silent even at midday. The only flicker of light along the main street, which, like the entire town, is subject to frequent daylong power outages, is the blue and white neon sign of the dollar-only La Terrazza café, powered by its own generator.

On the afternoon I visited Cojimar, La Terrazza was empty. The town's residents were down at the volcanic beach a half-mile away, where a Dantesque scene was unfolding. With Cuban and American officials on the brink of concluding an immigration deal, a last-minute rush was under way to get rafts in the water before Castro and the U.S. Coast Guard once again blockaded the Straits of Florida.

A thousand people crowded onto the small beach, some to see their friends and families off, most to observe the unfolding spectacle in quiet awe. All manner of raft, catamaran, and skiff, jerry-built from inner tubes, wooden doors, plywood sheets, Styrofoam, and fifty-five-gallon drums, littered the shoreline. One family had constructed a craft for twenty that looked like a miniature galleon. A raft worthy of Huck Finn flew a skull and crossbones.

As the rafters hurried to beat nightfall, hordes of black-market vendors tempted them with last-minute offers. Extra inner tubes went for $40; a university professor was selling a compass for $20. A woman peddled straw sun hats for a dollar. Her teenage daughter shouted, *"McCastro Fresquito!"*—hamburgers, two for a buck. Oars, in visible abundance, dropped from $10 each to $5. For onlookers, there were roasted peanuts wrapped in oily brown paper and pints of bathtub rum in unlabeled bottles at $3 each.

Yet the vendors were only part of the story. Those with true entrepreneurial talent and zeal had spent the previous week building an armada of seaworthy craft. Two state-employed auto mechanics had welded a platform over eight fifty-five-gallon drums and outfitted the craft with a prow, a keel, and even a helm. Painted bright red and equipped with four Russian-made life jackets, it sold for $1,100. "I sold two just like this yesterday for $900 each," the older mechanic told me. "I personally am not leaving. I already have my business here, as you can see."

The real showstopper that afternoon was a larger craft, wide enough to accommodate eight passengers. At its heart was a twenty-four-horsepower, two-cylinder turbine engine, exactly the type used to drive irrigation systems on state farms. Included in the $4,000 price were ten gallons of high-grade gasoline. Just as impressive as the raft was the boat trailer it was sitting on. That, in turn, was connected to the finest-looking motor vehicle for miles around—a silver jeep with a chrome roll bar and a row of high-powered headlights. Its owner, the same man who was selling the raft, sat in the front seat, listened to Aerosmith blaring on his Blaupunkt, sipping a $3 can of Budweiser, and calmly taking offers on his wares, not budging a dollar downward in price.

When I asked him if he also intended to leave Cuba, he looked at me askance. "I made $11,000 last week," he said. "I'm not leaving.

"What could be more fun than this?" he said, his face broadening into a smile. "When this is over, there will be a new business to open. And after that, yet another." ■

THE WOODCARVER'S TALE

By Mark Slouka

My Father's Story

These are the facts as my father told them. In the old country during the Second World War, in the forests and villages of Czechoslovakia west of Brno, a man named Machár, or Macháč, made a name for himself as a smuggler, moving entire families across the Moravian border near Trenčín, then across Slovakia to Hungary where others would take them on. His was the first and most dangerous leg in that human relay, a route as treacherous for its mazework of forest paths as for the fields and towns and cemeteries that stitched the landscape tight and close; windows were everywhere.

But Machár could do what others could not. He was the son of a *lesník*, a gamekeeper and expert woodsman. It was said that he knew the Moravian landscape as no one else; that he would move through the forests of spruce and fir, the mustard fields folded into the hills, use them to his advantage, with the thoughtless surety of an animal; that in winter dark, with the bowled smoothness of the trail filled with snow, and no moon or stars, he would find his way by the changing shape of sky showing through the trees.

From time to time word would come back from those he had helped across. This was of no small importance. Refugees were easy prey: They brought everything. No one knew they were going. No one would know if they didn't arrive. And every spring, bodies would thaw out of snowbanks all along the Hungarian border, coatless, shoeless, gold fillings wrenched from their mouths. Unlike some others, apparently, Machár would not steal or kill.

My father said he thought he might have met Machár himself in 1938, the spring before Munich. It was in Zdár. My father was stationed there, a member of the officers' corps put in charge of organizing the local militias. Machár (if, in fact, it was Machár) was a powerful, not overtall, awkward man. A peasant, slightly stupid, instinctively suspicious. My father remembered him standing against the wall, sullen, generally unwilling, hands hidden in the baggy pockets of his gray canvas pants, giving not the slightest indication of hearing, much less understanding, anything being said. The only reason my father noticed him at all was that Machár was already known in the region south of Hlínsko, in a small way, as something of a curiosity, an anatomical freak. Although the rest of his body was normally proportioned, his hands, apparently, were monstrous: not misshapen or hideous so much as simply outsized to the point of deformity. My father never saw them himself since the man by the wall never took his hands from his pockets.

But his hands alone would never have been enough to pull the man up from the floodplain of obscurity. Nor would his work as a smuggler have done so. Machár was an unlikely candidate for sainthood: gruff, uncommunicative, pathologically intense, frightening even to those he helped. The only reason anyone ever had cause to recall Machár at all was a story that was heard toward the end of the war, in 1944. In January of that year, in a scene so unlikely, so ridiculously dramatic it had to be true, Machár, while leading a family with three small children at night through the forests south of Bošany, was surprised by two German soldiers on either side of the trail. One only had time to yell, *Halt! Wer da?* before Machár had seized them both around the neck, pressed his huge thumbs into the soft space beneath their chins, and snapped their spines like a pair of spring rabbits. He lay them in the

Mark Slouka is the author of War of the Worlds: Cyberspace and the High-Tech Assault on Reality, *to be published by Basic Books in August.*

snow along the trail, and the group continued on. A testament not to bravery but to outrageous brute strength, the explosive fuel of fear. In any case, it was enough. His name, for a short while, flickered in the great dark; then it, too, went out.

The war ended (quietly, ambiguously, like the fine breath of rot raised by a thaw) exactly on April 26, 1945. It wasn't much, my father said: no Soviet tanks bucking across the soaking fields, just one man on horseback, a Cossack, at dawn, watching only his own slow passing in the dark windows, riding slowly up Zeyrova Street to the foot of the vineyards, then slowly back.

After him came others, two: three at a time. This was the liberation: no regiments, no heavy artillery. Nazi snipers still held the hills outside Brno. At night they would pick off the silhouettes of the Soviet soldiers against the fires of boards and bench slats blazing in the road until some of the men, my grandfather among them, couldn't stand it anymore and went out and said for the love of God stay to the side, why die for no reason? And apparently, the story goes, one of them looked up from where he squatted by the flames, then out into the vague darkness my grandfather had indicated, then back to the fire. *Da nicego. Nas mnogo,* he said. There are many of us. My grandfather had already crossed the street when the man spoke again, not looking up from the fire. Hide your women, old man. We're not the last.

The *havět,* the vermin (General Malinowsky's troops) came later. *Spína,* my father called them, dirt, the after-scum of the general army: illiterate, ragged, undisciplined, many of them two and three years on the front. They moved through from the southeast, a bestial tide, monstrously unpredictable, unafraid to die. Some, like stunned children, were capable of small, absurd gestures of generosity. Some gobbled toothpaste, squeezing it on their bread like pâté. My grandfather, hearing the sound of breaking glass and the crash of piano keys, came downstairs to find one, pants pulled down around his ankles and rifle by his side, using the Austrian baby grand as a toilet. When he was done, he left. Some raped a ten-year-old girl. She died. Four months later, they were gone.

By the fall of 1945, President Benes had returned from exile in London. By winter, the free press had returned to Czechoslovakia. And Machár was out of work. He went back, as far as anyone knew, to whatever it was he had been before the war. He disappeared.

The rest is almost too thin to tell: it offers no resistance, takes no shape. It slips through the sieve like water. Some remembered that Machár had worked in the *strojírna,* the factory, in Zďár. That he drank. That he had a foul temper. That he married a woman from Třebíč, and that the marriage for some reason had gone bad. Some recalled hearing about his father, a *lesník,* a gamekeeper, tortured and killed by poachers sometime after the first war.

A man from Javorník whom my father once met on a train claimed he had heard that Machár had escaped to Vienna after the Communist coup in 1948. Or maybe to Munich. That he had returned across the fences for his wife. Another time for his child. That he had been seen in the refugee camps near Innsbruck in the winter of 1949, where intellectuals and journalists threw bricks to each other to roughen their hands and improve their chances of being farmed out for laborers' jobs in Australia and Brazil. That he had returned to Czechoslovakia years later. Alone. That he'd been living, a broken man, somewhere near Jindrichuv Hradec.

My father shrugged. Lives are such baggy things, he said. Sometimes there are pieces left over. He looked out the window, not seeing the snow, the trees, the burdened wires. That's all, he said.

But of course it's not. In death as in life we push against the universe of facts, make a space, force our way like pups to a teat. And the world adjusts. Eternity, such as it is, is in the echo. Our lives continue to sound long after we are gone.

My Story

Years before I had heard of Machár, sixteen years, to be exact, before that long winter afternoon when my father told me what he remembered of a man he had probably never met, a drunk in a green Trabant dropped me and a woman I had been living with at a crossroads not far from Telč, Czechoslovakia. It was a hot, late afternoon in July of 1974. We were hitchhiking back to Brno and from there to Vyškov, to visit her parents. All day long she had been picking herbs along the wayside; they filled the huge shoulder bag she carried with her everywhere she went. She smelled like herbs. She was naked under her crumpled skirt and loose cotton sweater. She had fine golden fur on her legs and arms and stomach, and a small white scar on her left breast. We were both giddy with making love. Neither of us could remember eating anything and neither of us was hungry. I was not yet twenty-two years old.

With the sun still high in the poplars bordering the road, we started down a long hill thick with the smells of manure and cut hay and somewhere, coming from the village below, the fresh sweep of water. We seemed to unfold the season as we went. By the time we reached the bottom she was glad for the sweater. A fast, clattering stream ran behind the village along the base of a steep hill, then cut to the center and under the main road. We stood on the bridge and listened. Except for the water and the bark of a dog, everything was quiet. In the little town of white houses with clay-colored roofs and small, cramped gardens, I soaked my head under a pump while she went into a store to ask directions. She came out with two bottles of sticky sweet, yellow *limonada.* We drank them sitting on the rim of the well. The last bus would be coming through in an hour. A few doors down, apparently, there was a woodcarver's studio. I cupped my hands and drank some water.

There was no sign. It took a while for him to open the door, a big man with a heavy drinker's face and

small, close eyes. A growth of white chest hair, stark against his reddened skin, sprouted from his unbuttoned woolens. *Ano?* he said, stooping slightly forward under the door frame, one hand behind the half-opened door, the other propped behind the wall. She explained why we'd bothered him. He stared at her, mouth slightly open, rocking forward with each labored breath, until she started to say it again, then reached for a set of keys and shuffled past us down the walk.

A stone path, sunk into the earth and overgrown with weeds, ran along the house, then bisected a poor, shady garden with kohlrabi and radishes and a few ragged heads of lettuce. A chicken on the gate of a wooden fence turned nervously, then squawked to the ground. We passed through to a thick-walled shed, plastered and rude, maybe five meters square. He unlocked the door, the key clinking minutely against the steel, then moved aside.

We stepped into a white plaster room with a small, dusty window set deep and off-plumb, a cracked cement floor, rough pineboard shelves running the length of the walls from floor to ceiling. In the center, a hardback chair and a small table. The carvings, arrayed like infantry, lined the walls. Of the hundreds there, perhaps a dozen were of square-egged horses or faceless turtles or small, moored rowboats with pencil-thin oars. The rest were devils. Some were medieval, with straight, ropy hair and chiseled faces, sharp as an ax. Some were fat, grinning, tall as my forearm. There were small groups of miniatures, each the size of a man's thumb, with horns as tiny as a grain of rice.

Mě znají ve Vídni, he said suddenly from the doorway. They know me in Vienna. He stopped, standing away from the wall like a rooted tree, hands in his pockets. I nodded. Very nice, I lied. My friend nodded her agreement. This one's wonderful, she said, gently taking a small, naked devil off the shelf. The wood had dried badly. A small crack ran lengthwise from the nape of the neck, halfway down the back. He didn't say anything.

I brushed past her, pretending to be absorbed, and walked further along the wall, wondering how soon we could leave and whether we would have to buy something. I could feel the way her sweater slipped easily over her skin. I wanted to be outside.

In the end we bought a carving and left. I'm not even sure who picked it. We missed the bus that afternoon and ended up walking away from the road, straight through patchy woods and briar tangles and across small streams thick with stinging *kopřiva* to a place by a deserted cow pond, where we made love on our clothes laid out like a crazy blanket against the stickers. Afterward we left the crushed space we'd made and waded around in the over-warm water, no more than thigh deep, and splashed and laughed.



I inherited the statue. Twenty years later it stands on a bookshelf, suddenly eloquent, and I almost believe I remember noticing it that first time, wedged there between those ranks and battalions of devils, no more than a foot in height: the deformed figure of a man, grotesque, almost abstract, with huge, amphibious hands and feet, kneeling in supplication before an unseen judge, his head forced to his chest as though crushed from above, like Jesus on the cross except that rather than nailed to the horizontal wood, his hands, monstrous and heartbreaking, reach out ahead, palms out, as though begging forgiveness, or offering themselves as explanation for some irrevocable wrong.

It has been four years now since my father, noticing the statue perched precariously on the edge of the living-room bookshelf, began talking of the war and a man named Machár, or Macháč, who was said to have huge, outsized hands and whom he thought he might have met once over half a century ago. And I remember the man at the door, the grizzled cheeks, the wisps of uncombed hair, fine as an infant's, and I have no way of knowing if it was him.

The odds are less than small. I never actually saw the old man's hands. There was nothing in his face or manner. The town we had found ourselves in that summer afternoon was nowhere near Jindřichův Hradec, the town Machár was said to have returned to. And, not least, my father had always been a storyteller, a magician for whom even the most sober handkerchiefs tended to burst into tropical bloom at the slightest provocation. Perhaps there was no Machár. Or perhaps he was a composite of other men, of other stories overheard, misread, misremembered, from a war already half gone to fiction. Perhaps all I had, all I would ever have, was a wooden statue with hands as round and deep as a pair of catcher's mitts, chosen from a roomful of demons by a woman I'd once known and cared for.

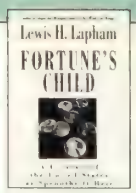
At the end of every life is a full stop, and death could not care less if what remains of the story is only a




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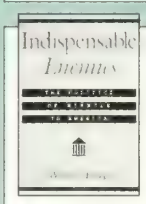
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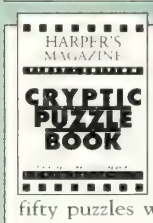


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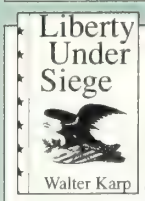
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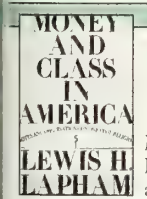
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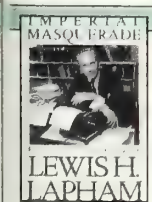
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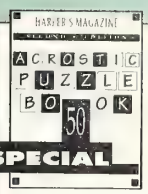
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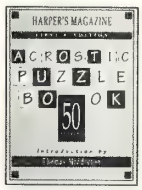
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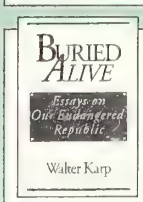
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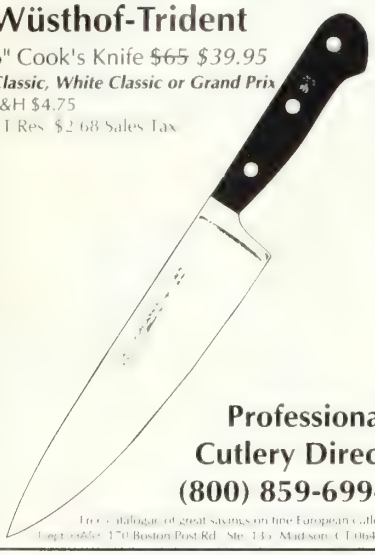
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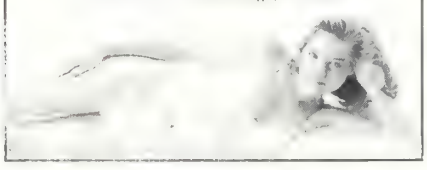
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fragment. It is up to us, the living, to supply a shape where none exists, to rescue from the flood even those we never knew.

We all, like beggars, must patch the universe as best we can.

The Woodcarver's Tale

As František Machár was being born into a wooden room thick with the smell of lamp oil and women's sweat, the brittle shelves of ice that covered the ruts on the roads sloping to the river were caving quietly under a hard March rain. Streams and rivulets threaded the meadows, gushed into roadside gutters, dug tunnels beneath old snowbanks, and swept on. The river loosed and groaned. The midwife cleaned up the mess and lowered the lamp. On her way home, she flung the afterbirth to the pigs. It was 1915, the second year of the war. The little boy was the son of the village *lesník*. It would be a year before the father returned from the front.

The child grew quickly, not all that different from the others who survived: tough, resistant, slow to cry and quick to forget. By the time he was five, he was spending his days in the forests with his father. They would rise at dawn in the cold. If it was raining, he would look down at his shoes walking up the dirt road and listen to the rain drumming on his hood like fingers on a wooden table. To keep his direction, he watched his father's legs, the black huntsman's boots with the heavy wool pants tucked in at the top, his father's hand with the tufts of black hair on each finger curled around the heavy, big-bore rifle he had brought home from the war. Where the road ended, the two of them would climb up through the soaking grass, away from the town, the river, to the fogged silence of spruce and pine.

In the forests the rain seemed only a distant hissing, a spray of mist across his face. The needles and moss sponged beneath his feet. He didn't talk, he listened, and his father's voice (low, clear, rough as a pine burl) seemed measured to the place, to the creak of trees, the spaces between the wind.

This, rather than any desk or pew, was his source. To him, the things his father's voice explained or touched were scripture; the questions, the answers, a forest catechism; every blood-tipped quill, every broken reed, every flash of color in the gloom, a parable of survival or death. What about this? Machár's father would say, indicating a yellow-stemmed mushroom prodding up to the air, a cap of loam still perched on its velvety head. And the boy would have to recite what he had learned: no skirt, no sheath, gills burnt orange and closely layered, swollen like pages left in the rain, a smell like crushed walnuts . . . *Dobrý*, he would say. It's good. And his father would dig beneath the loam with his hands, no pleased, and a finger's depth down his thumb would touch the rim of a ghostly sheath, thin as membrane. Eat this you'll die, he would say to the boy. Remember that.

Years of stories build around a core of fact. If a *skřivánek* burst from the edge of the meadow, his father would point out the flash of yellow on the underwing, the looping glide. They're nervous, quick to fly, he would say. When you see one, be careful. They tell you something's moving. That flower, bright as arterial blood? It's *Vlčí Mák*, the wolf poppy. Eat the bulb at the center for pain. And he told him about Pet Vaculík, a logger from Rásná, who crushed by a freak fall, a wrist-thick branch jammed through his body like a spear, had walked out of the forests on a bent-limb crutch, eyes like a saint, his mouth and chin dark with pollen, a bouquet of crimson poppies clutched in his bone white hand.

And wood: always the smell, the roughness, the company of wood. His father's saw raining softly, piling small hills of dust: orange, pink, white. The boy would run his fingers over the crosscut, reciting, pith, heartwood, sapwood, bark. The pith was the eye, he knew. Heartwood was next, bone-hard and dead. Sapwood was lighter: living cells that shrink and warp. It would clasp the

saw, admit the chisel, endure badly. Oak had clean, well-defined rings. It was strong, flexible, hard to cut, held the nail like a mother her child . . . Ash had a clear border, a frontier between heart and sap. Beech was reddish-white throughout: no heart, or sometimes a false one, soft and unworkable. Good, his father would say, when he had done well. Remember it.

And he would. He would remember it all: the long days, the grasses frozen in the meadows at noon . . . He would remember his own legs trembling down the tilting fields toward home, the evening star like a speck of mica in the blue above the hills, how his dreams would be filled with the sad soughing of trees and the burbling of water and his father's voice asking, What is it? What are they saying? and him knowing he could answer, easily, without effort, forever.

They found the severed head of the buck the week before he turned seven. His eyes had caught the dull light of bone before he saw they were teeth, drawn back from the gums, before the head itself had leaped into shape. It rested on the blood-soaked ground in a blue tangle of guts, just off the trail. His father squatted beside it. Poachers, he said. Fanning away the iridescent cloud with the barrel of the rifle, he turned the head carefully over, then turned it back. Looking up, he squinted off into the near distance of the forest. The poachers had left it there for him. To think about.

His father didn't speak but, knowing instinctively that death must be made familiar, deflated, made no more of than what it is, stood, picked a sturdy stick off the forest floor, and jammed it into the cavity of the neck. Hoisting the thing over his shoulder like some ghastly parody of a vagabond's sack, he set off straight across the woods, the boy following, until the random streams of ants crossing and recrossing the trail grew thicker and faster and there, fifty meters ahead, stood a swarming, chest-high mound of needles set against a spruce. Machár stood there beating the ants off his shoes with a fir branch, watching his father walk steadily toward it, carrying that grisly offering. When he touched the buck's head to the mound, the darkness boiled up like a cloud.

He was eight when the poachers roped his father to a hill just like it in the forests outside Brannā and the world should have jarred on its axis, the sun struggled to rise, but nothing happened. The river ran, the rain fell. No one told him how his father died. No one spoke to him about it. But he knew. And the lesson seemed clear: evil was everywhere, in the sheath on a mushroom, the opaque eyes of a butchered buck, and if you let it in the door, if you died, if things went wrong, it was your fault, your failure. The evil, in some dim way, was yours.

No one told Machár this; he figured it out himself, as he thought his father would have wanted him to. In the spring he and his mother moved away, boarding the train to Brno with a suitcase each, Machár carrying his father's death like a peach pit lodged halfway down his throat. It was in town that his hands, big and floppy as a puppy's since birth, first became a burden to bear. At home there had been the usual fistfights; here his hands seemed a particular curse, and he dragged them on like a badly anchored ship through the tedium of school (*ero, eras, erat*), through the three years at the *průmyslovna*, the technical institute, then the *strojírna* in Jdār. When the war came, he did what he did without thinking about it much. The work of a smuggler came easily to him. And then the war was over.

The peace was nothing. The country gasped for air like a swimmer caught in heavy surf, only to be buried again. Machár married his wife in January 1948. The coup came on February 24. On April 9, young Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's last hope of a return to the days of the first republic, plunged seven stories from Cernīnskÿ Palace to the cobbles. Machár's son was born the next winter.

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What are the facts?

Should Israel Return the Golan? A point can be made that the whole idea of Israel's yielding the Golan Heights to Syria in order to obtain peace has no merit. Syria's historic claim to the Golan is dubious. The Golan is a desolate plateau that covers less than one percent of Syria's territory. Its only purpose for Syria is as a launching pad for attacks against Israel. For Israel, on the other hand, it provides indispensable strategic depths against attack and the ability to monitor any hostile movement on the part of the Syrians. The current Israeli government seems to be disposed to return part or all of the Golan to Syria. But it would be a first in the history of the world that, in order to attain peace, the victor returned to the vanquished aggressor any territory that had been acquired in the conflict. A much saner and more justified approach would be for Syria, in the spirit of "land for peace", to yield the Golan to Israel. It would be a small price to pay for peace.

There are those who believe that if such a return of part or all of the Golan should ultimately be agreed upon, a United States military force should be stationed indefinitely in the area in order to serve as a buffer between the two countries. One wonders what peace it could be if it required outside military force to keep the erstwhile enemies apart. But there are practical reasons why stationing U.S. forces on the Golan would be a very bad idea.

A Potential Vietnam-like Scenario. U.S. forces on the Golan would be stationed in an area populated by a menagerie of well-armed terrorists, proxies of hostile radical regimes, such as those of Syria itself, but also of Iran, Iraq, Libya and others. They would not hesitate to target U.S. servicemen. Can one doubt that a suicide bomber would wish to find glory be blowing up a U.S. barracks and killing perhaps hundreds of U.S. soldiers, just as happened in Lebanon in 1983? And it's clear that an outraged American public would demand the immediate return of its troops from such a costly project that is of no discernible benefit to the United States. Putting a U.S. military presence into this stormy junction would inevitably drag the United States into costly inter-Arab and Arab-Israel disputes and would deepen Russia's involvement in the region.

> "Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel...could involve the United States in a Vietnam-like scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development."

Israelis have always fought their own battles. If U.S. troops were introduced into the area, Israel would become militarily dependent on the United States and that would be to the detriment of both countries. Because Israel is the most important strategic and political asset that the United States has in the entire Middle East, an area of immense geopolitical importance to our country. Deployment of U.S. troops on the Golan would change Israel's role from being such an asset to that of becoming a potentially substantial liability.

A U.S. military presence on the Golan, an area immediately adjacent to the Syrian capital of Damascus, would in time be perceived by Syria as an infringement on its sovereignty. President Assad or his successor could therefore be expected to push for eventual removal of such force, similar to Egypt's demand in 1967 for withdrawal of U.N. troops from Sinai—the event that triggered the Six-Day-War. Thus, war rather than peace could result form a deployment of U.S. troops. Involvement of the U.S. as a military buffer between Syria and Israel could be incredibly expensive in dollars, in casualties and in political capital. Worst of all, entering this quagmire could involve the United States in a Vietnam-line scenario, certainly a most unwelcome development.

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He came first for her, true, but it was for him that Machár left, crossing the open farmlands south of Mikulov to Drasenhofen, then through the Soviet zone to the English sector of Vienna. It was for him that he cut through the fences, at that time still free of electric current, slipped past the wooden towers, and slogged miles through the muddy dark toward the Austrian oil fields gusting up like candles in the distance.

Like a fox ferrying pups, he brought her across, then crossed again, running the gauntlet, returning one last time across the still February fields, eleven hours each way, for the pinched red face that did not know him, the wisp of black hair, the tiny spastic arms, softer than anything he had ever known or would again in this life. He wrapped him in a gray blanket and started back. The baby was sick. He cried, his small, animal wail sounding through the muffled pines. Terrified, Machár held him close to his chest with his huge hands and crashed on through the crusted snow. It was not until dawn, crossing a vast, white field ridged and furrowed by wind, that he stopped and unwrapped his hands from around the quiet bundle he had held for hours in the warm cave of his coat. It took him a long time to realize the child was dead.

And the world ran out like a marble down a long, dark tunnel, and then there was only silence. And voices, somewhere, trying to talk to him. She left sometime later, and he did not try to stop her. It was his fault, he knew, his utter responsibility and guilt, just as it had been his father's, except that his father's mistake had been fast and final and killed only one; Machár's had taken three. He would stop now, on roads, in doorways, his face suddenly collapsing like a child's that has been struck for no reason, and remain there, long after the pain had gone, with that surprised, inward look of a man still listening for the murmur of his own dead heart. For a time he existed in the refugee camps near Innsbruck, then, having nowhere else to go, returned to Czechoslovakia, alone.

When he returned he was arrested, though no punishment had ever meant less to a man. The nine years passed like sleep. He dug potatoes, worked the roads, fought when he had to. On a warm September afternoon, the bus dropped him off at the crossroads, and for the first and also the last time he walked down that long hill and over the bridge with the water clattering below. The house was owned by an uncle he had met once as a boy. Years ago he had heard he was living here. He took Machár in, then died. When no one came to claim the house, Machár stayed on.

And time built its slow rings around his guilt, hardening pain into truth. When a weasel slipped through the coin-sized knothole in the wall of the chicken house, he read the lesson in the carnage of feathers and blood. He saw it in the torment of a mole batted about by a cat on the front walk, tossed in the air, batted again. In the squeal of piglets eaten by the sows, in the demonic grunting from the pen.

It was not long after Machár arrived that he picked up a hunk of cedar from the splitting log. He turned it slowly, suddenly remembering his father cupping big handfuls of wet sawdust to his face, breathing in the rough perfume. It seemed to him that in the dead solid shape of the heartwood was the suggestion of a face, and he went to the shed for a chisel and hammer, took out his pocketknife, and started hacking him free: small, straight horns, curved nose almost touching the thick upper lip, the rude first progenitor of many generations to come, truer and more lasting than the generations of men.

And that is where he would stay, alone, unbothered, not well but not dangerous, frightening only to children who like being frightened, staggering on under the weight of his days until the morning he tried to rise from his chair at the table and found he could not, then laid his head on the wood by his half-eaten breakfast and died.

And yet this could not have been all. Months earlier, there was an October afternoon threatening snow that found him, like every other afternoon, in the workshop, moving carefully through the living cells to the dark striping of the heart. There would be no salvation here. No love. No redemptive vision of midges suspended above the river and naked children swimming till late in the flatwater by the dam. Only mercy, perhaps: unbidden, emerging as of its own volition with each lifting curl of the unshaped wood, revealing to him, as though for the first time, the faces of those who had worked his father free, beating at the black swarm moving up their arms and legs, then wrapped him in burlap and carried him home; those for whom his father's death had been meant as a warning. Those, so like his father, after all, who did not listen. Who did not know how.

It would come back to him in a rush: the woodshed the day after his father's funeral, filled to the roof with cedar, oak, even apple wood, aged, split, and stacked. And how every Sunday at dawn, there would be something hung out back, out of reach of the dogs: a pair of ducks tied at the neck, a pheasant, a whole leg of venison. And the old coin sack filled with toys: miniature pinecone owls with button eyes, twig feet, and wings of leaves; hazelnut mice with hair whiskers and tiny rope tails . . . and sitting there, watching his huge hands doing their work, old Machár could almost hear his father's voice: remember them.

And he would remember now too the hand lost in his like an egg in a nest, the one he had dropped that night as he lunged for their throats, the softness under his thumbs coming up against the bone, the clear crackling as of branches when he brought the strength of his shoulders to bear through his forearms, his wrists . . .

And that is where I leave him, years before my life would cross his, in a bare room thin with wind, outside the small pocked window shoved off-plumb into the thick plaster wall, small, curled leaves gathering against the clutter of fences and catching in the tangled gardens, he not hearing the bang

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and bang and bang of an unpainted shutter calling the river to frost, not seeing the small aromatic drifts of shavings gathering, spilling off the gullied lap of his blue canvas pants to his shoes (set far apart and sad like the facing cornerstones of some vast, unspared mansion), from them to the cracked and broken floor, knowing only that emerging from the palmed wood was not the same familiar shape, the monotonous affirmation of his guilt, but (see the head bent low to the chest like a resting child, the bending back, the aching, cross-hatched ribs, those huge and haunted hands, palms outward, supplicant) his brave and broken self. ■

March Index Sources

1 Center for the Study of Policy Attitudes (Washington); 2 *Harper's* research; 3,4 Urban Institute (Washington); 5 Third Millennium (N.Y.C.); 6 Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (Washington); 7 Public Opinion Foundation (Moscow); 8 CNN–*USA Today* poll (Washington); 9 Alliance for Justice (Washington); 10,11 Congressional Management Foundation (Washington); 12 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; 13,14 *New York Times*–CBS News poll (N.Y.C.); 15,16 Department of Consumer Services & Research, *Good Housekeeping* magazine (New York); 17 Anna Sui boutique (N.Y.C.); 18 *Premiere* magazine (N.Y.C.); 19 Avis (Garden City, N.Y.); 20 U.S. Department of Commerce; 21,22 U.S. Census Bureau; 23 Louis Harris & Associates (N.Y.C.); 24 American Association of Blood Banks (Bethesda, Md.); 25 Federal Judicial Center (Washington); 26 Registrar, Evergreen State College (Olympia, Wash.); 27,28 Roper Starch Worldwide (N.Y.C.); 29,30 U.S. Department of Agriculture; 31 Konishi Koi Farm (Hiroshima, Japan); 32 Dr. Mary Poos, National Research Council (Washington); 33 Bob Rotatori, Cleveland Metroparks (Hinckley, Ohio); 34 U.S. Geological Survey (Reston, Va.); 35 Oxford University Press (Oxford, England); 36 Louis Harris & Associates (N.Y.C.); 37 Oxford University Press (N.Y.C.); 38 McLibel Support Campaign (London); 39 Oklahoma City Police Department (Okla.).

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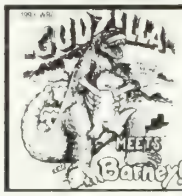
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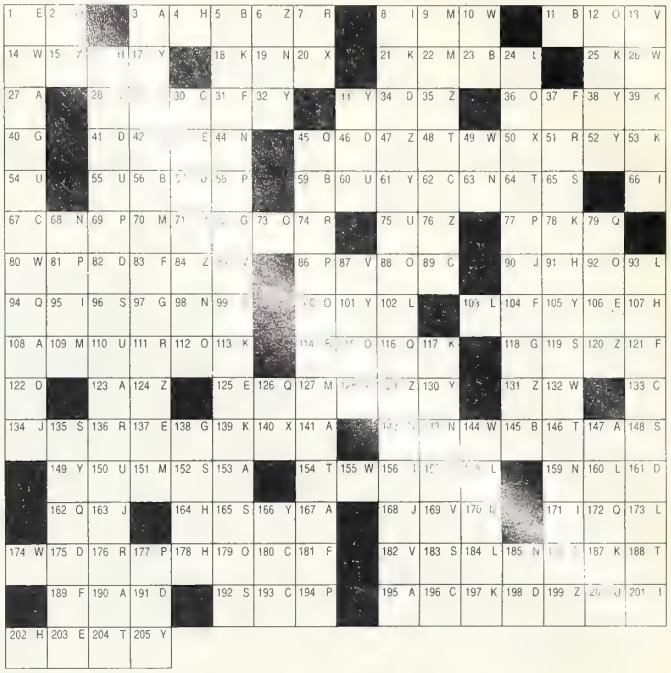
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CLUES WORDS

A. 1934 Shirley Temple star vehicle (2 wds.)
195 190 123 147 141 3 167
153 27 108

B. Pliant, supple
145 56 59 11 5 23

C. Overshadows, surpasses
67 196 180 62 30 193 133 89
186

D. Location of the penthouse in Jason and Burton's "Penthouse Serenade" (4 wds.)
175 41 198 34 161 46 191 122
57 82

E. Downfall, undoing, Waterloo
137 106 203 43 99 1 125

F. Stays around, sojourns
121 189 37 31 83 104 181

G. Lachrymose
138 97 72 118 40

H. Indian hemp, as grass, e.g.
91 178 202 4 16 107 164

I. Primitive adding machine
171 66 8 95 156 201

J. Set fire to maliciously
168 163 134 90 29

K. 1943 song by Drake, Hoffman, and Livingston (2 wds.)
21 25 139 53 39 113 117 78
18 187 197

L. Steak cut from a rib roast
158 103 184 93 24 173 160 28
102

M. "Kiss me as if you entered gay / My heart at some ____" (Browning, "In a Gondola")
70 22 170 9 151 109 127

N. Amusing
68 185 157 63 98 44 143 19
159

O. Intended for supplementary use when needed
12 36 88 92 2 73 115 179
100 112

P. Denies, renders ineffective
77 69 194 81 177 58 86

Q. Composition for keyboard to exhibit the player's technique
162 116 172 45 94 79 126

R. Swarming
51 136 7 74 111 176 114

S. Work out carefully; add details
135 65 152 192 119 183 165 96
148

T. Strata
64 146 154 204 48 188

U. Fr. chemist (1743–94), founder of modern chemistry
55 60 142 150 128 54 75 200
110

V. Eng. satirical novelist (1903–66; *Vile Bodies*, *Scoop*)
169 182 87 85 13

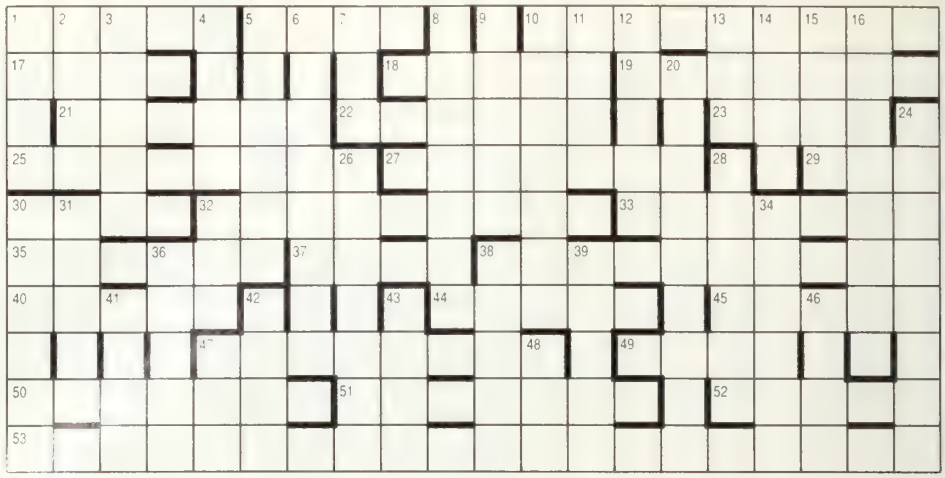
W. 1925 Friml-Hooker song from *The Vagabond King* (3 wds.)
174 132 144 10 49 26 155 80
14

X. Genuine goods (after "the")
15 50 140 42 20

Y. Immoderation, imprudence, excess
52 61 149 101 38 166 17 130
33 205 105 32

Z. Fool, simpleton
199 131 129 84 35 71 47 124
76 120 6

PUZZLE



Smart Set

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

Seven unclued Across lights (words in the diagram) are each related to seven unclued Down lights. The paired words specify 53 Across, a five-word phrase.

Clue answers include three proper nouns and one foreign word. Unchecked letters in the unclued words might be rearranged to spell AS IF CAREER CHOICE MEANT.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 65.

ACROSS

1. *Theme word A* (5)
5. Frost's poetry recited (4)
10. *Theme word B* (9)
17. Lines heard, lines heard (4)
18. Chanel #1—you can drink it (5)
19. Going down with out going on? (7)
21. *Theme word C* (6)
22. He's horribly ratty in name only? Just the opposite! (6)
23. *Theme word D* (4)
25. Math lord gets into bondage (8)
27. Cops unmask S&L chief (7)
29. Louis returned one, alternatively (3)
30. Fall from grace, dropping Latin for recess, in church (4)
32. *Theme word E* (9)
33. Game holds up hold-up (7)
35. *Theme word F* (6)
37. Got down and turned tail (4)
38. Military is deployed like . . . like . . . (10)
40. Stocking a Biblical book (5)
44. The asset set aside illegally can't stand (5)
45. Brig elected to incarcerate big star (5)
47. *Theme word G* (8)
49. To an auditor, could be a little buggy (4)
50. Piercing comparatively complicated ironies (7)
51. Make one Italian pasta turnover in a French shell (7)
52. Chekhov's one not to be revived (5)
53. *See instructions*

DOWN

1. Wild cats get lost (4)
2. First off, litter that hurts (4)
3. Relish cooked up without one in glass ovens (5)
4. Gnu, llama—there's nothing between them (4)
5. *See 10 Across* (6)
6. *Dumb and Dumber* (no rating) (8)
7. Bumped into them rising, yet losing height (3)
8. *See 32 Across* (7)
9. Almost climb a ladder down to get into hot water (5)
10. Fancy loving oneself (7)
11. Building material having length and height at the center (4)
12. Waffles, after cutting off the head and sides (5)
13. Hope, for example, cut short (3)
14. One going North can turn in the opposite direction (4)
15. Being upright, track perjurer (4)
16. Roundest letters can be like letters at a post office (8)
20. Coming out from ruling, set in a tizzy (9)
24. *See 47 Across* (8)
26. *See 35 Across* (7)
28. *See 21 Across* (6)
30. *See 1 Across* (6)
31. In short, work up the opposite of cold snap (5)
32. Gym with a small round ball (3)
34. *See 23 Across* (6)
36. Facility understanding Latin? There's a kind of agreement here (5)
38. South American Indian cook (5)
39. She knows the score, I hear: Mets 0 (5)
41. Blade changed his voice initially (4)
42. Contend with watch (4)
43. It blows up in me inside (4)
45. Show income from swinger (4)
47. Don't start to rotate sticker (3)
48. Trespassing is in when one is out (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Smart Set," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the January puzzle, "Love and Kisses," are Doris Troy, Amherst, Massachusetts; Maris Bootzin, Tucson, Arizona; and Ann Drummond, Micanopy, Florida.

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BOUNTY

A Novella in Which a Genetically Flawed Hero Flees Through an American Dystopia, Evading Slave Traders and Regaining His Liberty

By George Saunders

◆

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THE FREEDOMS OF THE PAST

On the Advantage of Looking Backward

By Frederick Turner

MEXICO AND ITS DISCONTENTS

After the Peso's Collapse, an Unemployed Population Looks North

By Douglas W. Payne

Also: Renée Askins, Richard Rodriguez, Mark Helprin

To qualify for this exhibition, each

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Michael Lucero
Anthropomorphic Jug Form with Leaping Frog, 1994

artist was required to break something.



Wendell Castle
An Anxious Object #2, 1992

Breaking Barriers

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APRIL 1995

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LETTERS

The Battle over Abortion

Although Verlyn Klinkenborg claims in his report on abortion ["Violent Certainties," January] that "with the election of Bill Clinton, the abortion controversy shifted onto new ground," he fails to bring a fresh perspective to the pro-choice position. Klinkenborg merely rehashes old sentiments and observations that, in their tiresome familiarity, have effectively stalled the abortion debate.

The most questionable part of Klinkenborg's article is his depiction of an aborted fetus. He refuses even to use the impersonal "it" in his description of "an uncongealed white membrane—scarcely consistent enough to *be* a membrane." The implication is that the fetus isn't a life—long a popular, yet easily defeated, pro-choice argument. Pro-choice advocates support the right to accessible abortions not because we believe that abortion *isn't* ending a life but because we believe there are rights at stake more important than the life of the fetus—namely, a woman's right to reproductive freedom and the inviolability of her own body.

Amy Fisher
Bloomington, Indiana

Harper's Magazine *welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

Verlyn Klinkenborg uses his visits to two Wisconsin abortion clinics as a platform from which to spout pro-abortion platitudes. He focuses on a small fringe of the activist pro-life movement and portrays the pro-abortion counterprotesters in an extremely favorable light. His assertions that the "pro-choice" movement allows people to make their own decisions and that the "pro-life" movement makes decisions for people are ridiculous. Every law in some way limits our bodily freedom. Many decisions are made for each of us every day by certain laws, and clearly there is a continuum of things the government ought to prohibit, such as murder and rape, and things it ought not to, such as checkered shirts or striped pants.

Klinkenborg's emphasis on a few crazy and violent gunmen paints a distorted picture of the pro-life movement. It is not particularly illuminating to suggest that the use of terrorist methods means one's cause is wrong. One can believe that women's rights are of immense importance without also believing that abortion is a good way to achieve those rights. Violent methods indicate only that the cause is desperate, not invalid.

Maura Lea Volkmer
Member, Feminists for Life
New Haven

Verlyn Klinkenborg's essay clearly demarcates the division between the

two sides of the abortion debate: the people who bear the burden of thinking for themselves, and those who are relieved to let someone else do their thinking for them. In the middle are the majority of Americans who are "complacent" and would rather just "not think about it."

As one might expect, Klinkenborg quickly aligns himself with the thinking people. So quickly, in fact, that he knows just by looking that the anti-abortionists across the street have stopped considering variables.

Like others who raise their voice on the issue, Klinkenborg attempts to push and shove ordinary Americans to one side or the other. He points emphatically to a clear line between the opposing forces, where in fact no clear line exists.

In the quiet majority that Klinkenborg judges as "complacent," the American public possesses something that neither extreme can claim: a large expanse of common sense. This manifests itself in two ways.

First, the idea of pro-abortion is absurd. Only a deranged mind could conceive of abortion as a good and healthy activity. It is never better, nor will it ever be better, than the lesser of two evils.

Second, the idea of anti-choice is every bit as absurd. Everybody makes mistakes, and allowances must be made. Help and forgiveness are requirements of a functioning society, not luxuries. And news that people hurting, even killing, innocent people in the name of protecting innocent unborn lives speaks its own judgment and should be dealt with accordingly.

Philip W. Atlakson

A clarifying note in Verlyn Klinkenborg's article misinforms the reader, "In *Roe* v. *Wade*, the Supreme Court set a twenty-four-week limit for elective abortions." In fact, *Roe* did not set a twenty-four-week *limit:* what it did was allow, but not compel, states to proscribe elective abortion at that point in a woman's pregnancy. "If the State is interested in protecting fetal life after viability, it may go so far as to proscribe abortion during that period except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother . . ."

In practice, the states have taken up *Roe*'s invitation to proscribe post-viability elective abortion. But it is important to recognize that an invitation to set a limit is not itself a limit. A state that chose not to proscribe post-viability elective abortion would be acting in accord with *Roe*, not violating it.

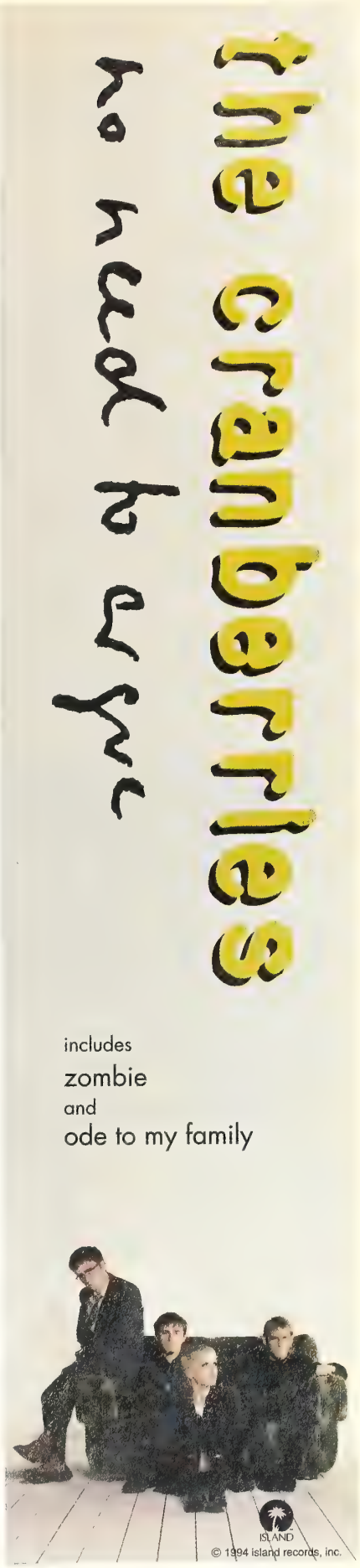
Laypersons may not care much about subtle issues of constitutional interpretation. But philosophers and jurists surely do. So, I expect, do the many *Harper's Magazine* readers who care about the fate of *Roe*, and about the survival of abortion rights in the United States.

N. Ann Davis
University of Colorado at Boulder

As one who works in the field of women's reproductive health, who has had abortions, and whose mother had motel-room, mafia-regulated abortions in the Sixties, I would like to supply a perspective missing from Verlyn Klinkenborg's depiction of the past and present landscapes of abortion.

On four separate occasions I found myself sitting in Dr. Liz Karlin's waiting room (the same one visited by Klinkenborg), feeling neither guilt, shame, resignation, embarrassment, fear, nor regret—emotions Klinkenborg suggests are universal to women facing abortion. My conscience and imagination were never pricked by ambivalence or what-ifs. In fact, like my mother before me and other women I know, I felt a tidal wave of gratitude and relief. I also felt powerful because I was taking charge of my reproductive fate.

For me and for the women on whose behalf I am writing, the individuals who performed our abortions are heroes. They provided us safe passage through years of ignorance, confusion, low self-esteem, or simply failed birth control. Perhaps most heroic were my mother's masked motel-room men, whom she found neither "repugnant" nor



"filthy" but professional, gentle, and as dedicated to women's self-determination as the doctors who prevail in the dangerous landscape of abortion today.

Ingrid Johnsson
Madison, Wisc.

Like Verlyn Klinkenborg, I, too, cannot understand how it is possible for anyone to presume to control the biological activity of another person's body. The issues of right and wrong in this instance rest with each individual. But as an adopted person searching for my birth mother, I'm sure glad that the question-mark-sized hand in the stainless-steel tray was not my own.

Christopher Hinton
Montreal

Fighting for Bosnia

David Rieff, in his essay "Bosnia's Fall, Our Failure" [Readings, February], castigates the West for its failure to intervene in Bosnia. Fair enough. Yet what seems odd is Rieff's apparently cold-hearted attitude toward the potential slaughter of U.S. soldiers—"the Western powers did not care enough about Bosnia's fate to sacrifice the lives of even a few of its soldiers."

There are good arguments for U.S. intervention in the Bosnian genocide, and Rieff makes several of them. But the responsibility of carrying out the bloody task should fall to the advocates of military force. Is Rieff a soldier in the Army or Marine Corps? Would he be willing to enlist today if his suggestions were followed by President Clinton?

Were the life in question Rieff's and not that of an anonymous twenty-one-year-old, would this intellectual be so enthusiastic about the wars of other nations?

John Cheves
Hinesville, Ga.

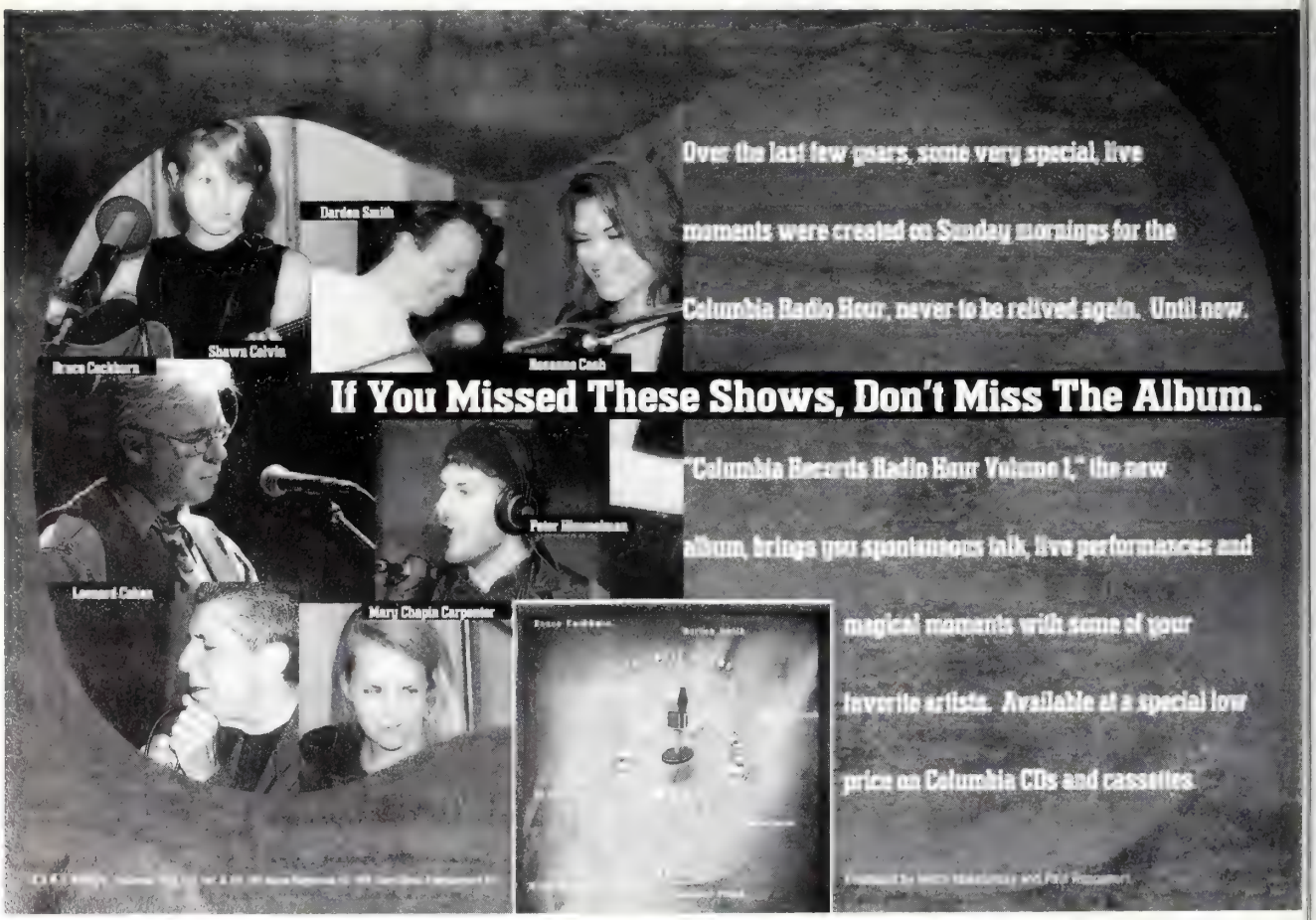
The Purpose of the University

Richard Rorty makes a bold and undocumentable claim ["Demonizing the Academy," Readings, January] when he asserts that the American academy is "the last remaining defender of the poor against the rich and of the weak against the strong," but one wonders whether he is bragging or complaining. His imagined scenario assigns to the academy a responsibility it is utterly incompetent to handle. The transcendent purpose of colleges and universities, it seems almost quaint to say, is scholarship, conducted by students and faculty in an open environment within a meritocratic system.

Joel P. Smith
Madison, Wisc.

Richard Rorty concludes that the attack by the right on academia is

Continued on page 87



NOTEBOOK

Pax Economica

By Lewis H. Lapham

If some great catastrophe is not announced every morning, we feel a certain void. "Nothing in the paper today," we sigh.

—Paul Valéry

By the second week in January the number of wars in progress in the world had come up to the round sum of one hundred, Mexico was bankrupt, and I was having trouble avoiding people who wanted to talk about the probable collapse of the international monetary system, or the imminent destruction of both the ozone layer and the South Atlantic Ocean. Maybe it had something to do with the weather, but I was coming across so many bearers of bad news that I gladly agreed to attend an exhibition of the late Buckminster Fuller's "World Game" in New Haven, Connecticut, and, by the same day's mail, accepted an invitation to hear Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the secretary general of the United Nations, speak to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City about the geopolitical design of the next century.

Fuller I remembered as an amateur prophet, a dreaming and enthusiastic man always looking for ways out of the prison of the status quo; Boutros-Ghali I knew to be a subtle Egyptian, accustomed to concealing even the most appalling calamities under the rugs of diplomatic euphemism; and I figured that either the game or the speech might provide some sort of counterpoint to the premonitions of disaster. I was proved wrong, but not for reasons that I could have anticipated.

The performance of the "World Game," which was the first of the two events, took place on the afternoon of January 27 in the ballroom of the New Haven Lawn Club. Similar in its theory and objectives to Monopoly, but played without dice by two hundred people standing on a map roughly the size of a basketball court, it turned out to be best understood as a sermon meant to remind the participants that civilizations perish and money doesn't grow on trees. The map—Fuller's visualization of the globe, not the familiar Mercator projection—travels around the country in the custody of the facilitators and referees from the World Game Institute in Philadelphia, who also supply the necessary briefing books, slides, lesson plans, and paper hats. Over the last twenty years, in university gyms and corporate conference halls everywhere in the country, they have handed out countless sheets of instructions to concerned members of Congress, suspicious business executives, alarmed biophysicists, and bewildered schoolchildren. At the Lawn Club they stretched the map across the full length of the ballroom floor and arranged two hundred graduate students from the Yale School of Management as a set of pawns on a geo-economic game board.

An early afternoon sun filled the tall French windows with brilliant light, and the students, clutching the mimeographed forms that told their fortunes for the next four hours, sat or slouched against the walls while the head facilitator, a man wearing his hair in a ponytail who looked like he once might have played drums for the Jefferson Airplane, stood under the chandelier in the center of the room—i.e., slightly south and west of the Aral Sea—and explained the rules. Each of the first one hundred students represented 1 percent of the world's population (i.e., 58 million human beings), and at the facilitator's direction they took their places on the map in one of the ten regions (Southeast Asia, North America, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, etc.) assumed to possess a coherent cultural and economic identity. Eighteen students, most of them dressed in soft sweaters and jeans, crowded onto the Indian subcontinent, and seven students stood a good deal more comfortably on North America. The players in each region began the game with an allowance of natural and material resources (energy, food, money, manufactured goods) consistent with the percentages published in the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook* and expressed as symbolic tokens (toy airplanes, candles, plastic fruit) that could be exchanged for other tokens, for bank credit, or, in the best of all possible circumstances, for the slips of blue paper denominated as "certificates of well being." Once the broad mass of humanity had been settled on the map, the facilitators divided the remaining hundred students into small sections representing the agencies of international commerce and goodwill—the United Nations, multinational energy and food corporations, UNESCO, the World Bank, the news media. In place of trade goods, the cartels received large sums of cash, and the benevolent organizations received the power to levy taxes, impose fines, and enforce laws regulating the pollution of rivers, the despoiling of forests, and the murder of Cambodians.

THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF WHITEWATER

A symposium sponsored by Harper's Magazine

National Press Club, October 25, 1994

In the October 1994 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Gene Lyons's article "Fool for Scandal: How the *New York Times* Got Whitewater Wrong" examined the *New York Times*'s Whitewater reporting, which began with a March 8, 1992, story by Jeff Gerth. Lyons revealed a pattern of selective reporting, inaccuracies, fact suppression, and misleading innuendo in the *Times*'s coverage of the Whitewater affair.

Lyons and other prominent journalists debated the issues raised by Lyons's piece in a *Harper's*-sponsored symposium held at the National Press Club on October 25, 1994. The *Times* declined to send a representative.

Participants:

Lewis H. Lapham (Moderator)
Harper's Magazine

Gene Lyons
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Stan Crock
Business Week

Tom Hamburger
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

John Camp
CNN

Trudy Lieberman
Columbia Journalism Review

Brian Duffy
U.S. News & World Report

Jeff Birnbaum
Wall Street Journal

Symposium transcript, $10
Whitewater issue, $6.50 (U.S.)
Send orders to: *Harper's Magazine*, Dept. Whitewater, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

The overcrowding on the Asian landmass at the east end of the ballroom made the point about the imbalance between the rich and poor nations of the earth, but nothing in the rules or on the map took account of any of the world's sorrows that couldn't be defined as a function of money. The briefing books assumed the existence of a Pax Economica arrived at by always rational human beings trading with one another in always orderly capital and commodity markets, and none of the statistical lists introduced the element of politics or raised the unhappy questions about mankind's inveterate pride, stupidity, and fear.

It needed the better part of an hour to move all the players into position, to make sure that everybody had enough pencils and was wearing the correct paper hat. Before the referees set the game in motion I noticed the man with the ponytail over against the French windows, nodding in a conspiratorial way toward the densely populated southern latitudes and offering, sotto voce, a last word of advice to the students wearing the emblems of the food and energy cartels.

"Remember," he said, "those people are desperate."

Left briefly to their first instincts during the early stages of the game, a few of the more literal-minded students, who apparently had been reading history instead of management theory, ignored the instructions about achieving "sustainable agriculture," "racial harmony," or "the convergence of incomes" and chose instead to pursue the simple, old-fashioned pleasures of economic imperialism. Their purposes would have been well understood by Boris Yeltsin and Saddam Hussein, as well as by the Chase Manhattan Bank and the General Motors Corporation, but they failed to persuade a bearded young man wearing dark glasses, seated as impassively as a stone Buddha on the Malabar Coast, fending off bank loans as well as bribes. He said that he had no interest in Japanese trade deals, no matter how lucrative or seemingly benevolent, and that if it were left up to him, he would as soon see Tokyo sink into the Pacific Ocean as trade one tusk of ivory from one innocent and unsuspecting elephant for all the high-definition television screens in Yokohama.

After about half an hour the facilitators interrupted the game for a situation report and a further clarification of the rules. The students playing the parts of media correspondents had been wandering among the continents in search of news, and four or five of them took turns reading their notes into a handheld microphone. Without exception they had a natural bent for the facile phrase, and it was clear that they believed everything they had been told.

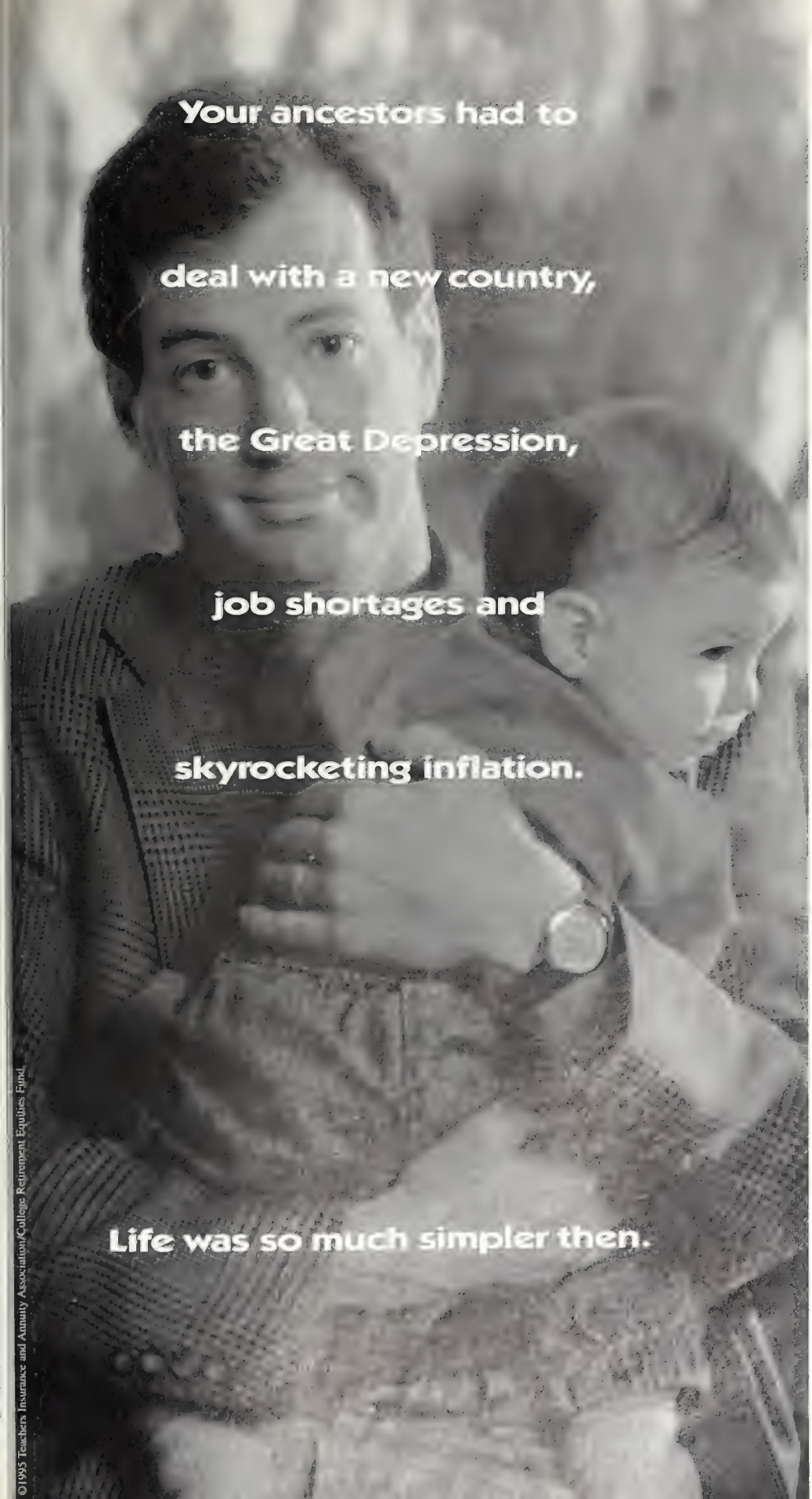
"India is super-nice."

"Africa has stolen North America's oil."

"Europe has an attitude problem."

A few students had been caught stealing toy airplanes and plastic oranges, and a referee explained that outright robbery, a practice to which he referred as "spontaneous resource allocation," didn't quite fit either the spirit or the specifications of the game. He hoped that the participants would bear in mind Fuller's injunction to increase one's wealth by peaceful means (trade or production or purchase) and to rely on the blessing of human intelligence rather than trust to the bluster of gunboats.

The subsequent rounds of play brought forth models of Utopia worthy of Sir Thomas More. Even though the facilitators complicated matters by updating the bulletins of approaching doom—the always heavier burden of the world's population, the increasing number of countries threatened by starvation, the higher prices for oil, the spread of disease—the students, who apparently had missed the morning's headlines (about Mexico's debt, refugees wandering south in Rwanda, civil war in Chechnya), bid up the market in miracles. The paper hats representing the once-upon-a-time Soviet Union paid $15 billion to the paper hats representing the United Nations, and by so doing permanently removed from within



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their borders all traces of ethnic conflict. Africa rid itself of AIDS and female circumcision; political oppression vanished from the plains of China; and throughout the whole of Latin America the ruling oligarchs distributed their land, their cattle, and their coffee trees to grateful and deserving peasants. The ballroom filled with the shouting of prices bid and asked for Paradise regained, and from time to time above the din of voices the excited cry of "Media man! Media man!" preceded the announcement of yet another forest rescued, another river saved.

But what was truly wonderful about the game was the news that everybody won. Four hours after the first tentative exchanges of toy airplanes and plastic oranges, the facilitators stopped trading for the afternoon and asked for summary statements. Once again the microphone was passed around the room, and one by one the delegations rose to make their reports. The energy cartel had obtained a 50 percent profit on its investments; the U.N. not only solved nine of the ten global problems to which it had been assigned but also had accumulated an immense reserve of surplus cash; the commercial banks held mortgages on the entire world; and the spokesman for the transnational food cartel was so overwhelmed by its financial success that he could barely speak. "I'm not sure I'm supposed to say this," he said, "but we're rich. No, not just rich, but really, really rich." Offered partly as a modest boast and partly as a sheepish confession, the statement was greeted with spontaneous cheering.

Five days later in New York, listening to Boutros-Ghali address two hundred senior members of the American corporate establishment in a Manhattan drawing room, I wondered why he wasn't wearing his paper hat. The setting was a good deal more formal—sober gentlemen in dark suits taking discreet notes with gold pencils, a faultlessly tailored diplomat in place of the man with the ponytail, no game cards, no slide projections, no cries of "Media man!"—but the similarities between the two occasions were more striking than the differences. Like the business-school students in New Haven, the prosperous executives whom the students hoped to become conceived the future as a product sold for money, the peace of nations as an equation in advanced economics.

Introduced by David Rockefeller as a man of great wisdom and unparalleled insight into the hearts of men, Boutros-Ghali talked about the ways and means of defending the castles of wealth against the onslaught of the world mob. The task was becoming an increasingly troublesome one, and the U.N. didn't have enough money or troops (not nearly enough money or troops) to keep up with the demand for early rescues and timely interventions. He mentioned the 70,000 soldiers presently under the U.N. command, thinly distributed around the world in sixteen different peacekeeping operations and running up expenses at the rate of $3.6 billion per annum, and pointed out that with annual dues payments of only $1.8 billion from its member states, the U.N. couldn't very well maintain a decent standard of global decorum.

Hearing Boutros-Ghali speak, I thought of the manager of a once prosperous golf resort or grand hotel making his report to the grounds committee, explaining that decent help was expensive and hard to find, and that the parking of tanks on the sixteenth fairway tended to spoil the grass. If the U.N. had a standing army, it could send a thousand paratroopers to places like Kigali before the trouble started, and thus (for the relatively modest price of $50 million) prevent the outbreaks of genocide that later might cost as much as $500 million to repair. As the loyal servant of the international community, he was bound to carry out the instructions of the U.N. Security Council, but what was he to do if the Security Council had no instructions, if the troops went home because they hadn't been paid, and if the member states didn't know what it was that they wanted or expected of the U.N.? Always he was finding himself "back at square one," each new crisis requiring a new set of responses, and no lessons ever being learned that could be applied on a different continent or carried forward into the next year. Like any other good club steward he knew how to make do under reduced circumstances, and if what the members intended was that the U.N. show up on state occasions disguised as a fig leaf or a scapegoat, he was happy to oblige, but then he couldn't be held responsible for the condition of the putting greens or the corpses found every morning on the beach. The ladies and gentlemen in the drawing room listened to the secretary general's remarks with attentive and solemn respect, and at the end, after a few ornamental questions that didn't dwell on the $1 billion in unpaid dues owed to the U.N. by the United States, they expressed their appreciation with a murmur of polite applause.

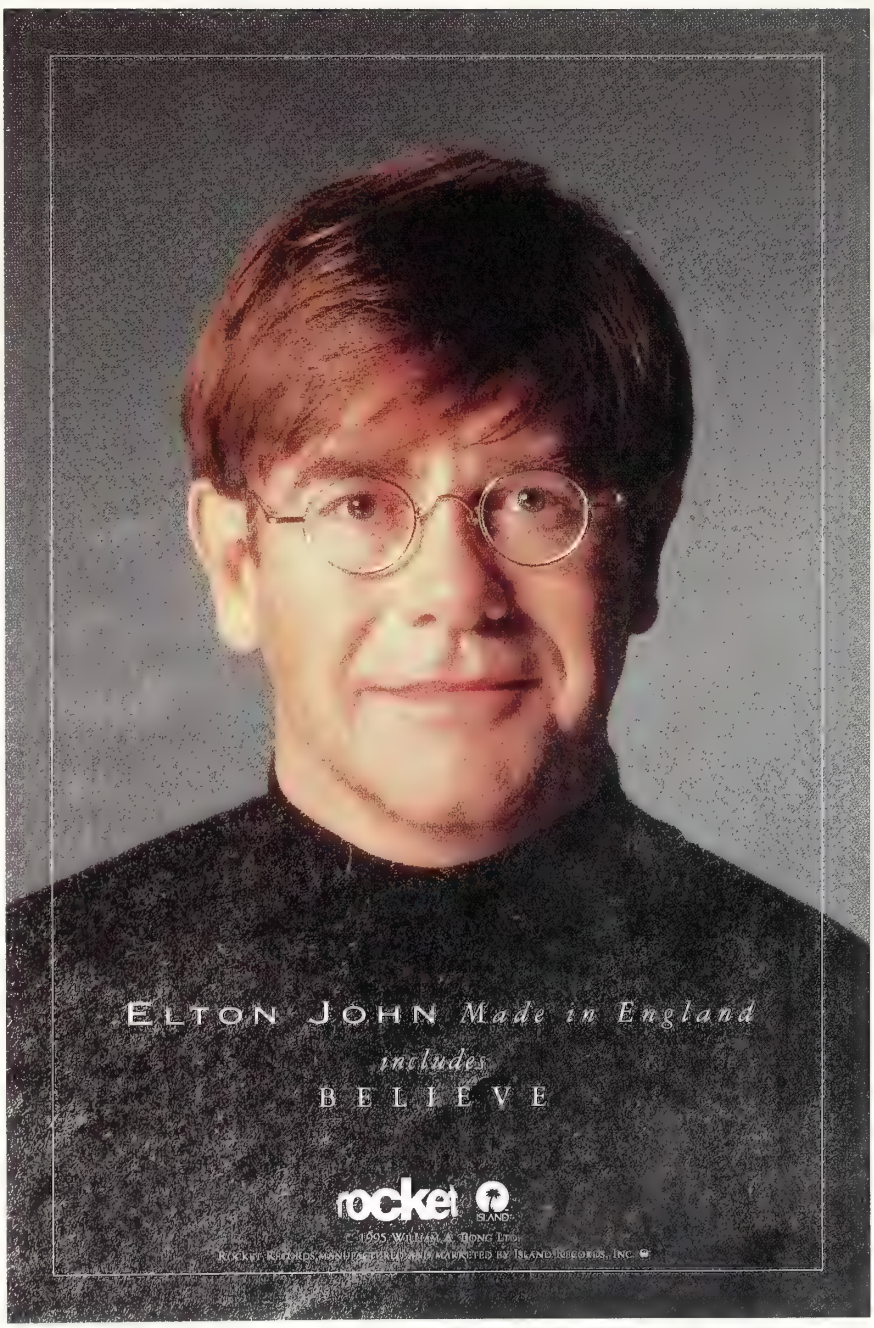
What was missing from the drawing-room discussion, just as it had been missing from the board game played in the ballroom, was the sense that the new set of circumstances forced on the world by the events of the last fifty years might require a new set of blueprints from which to construct an intelligible and realistic foreign policy. At the end of the Second World War in the summer of 1945, the rest of the world was mostly in ruins, and the rulers of the American state found it easy enough to believe that they could buy the world's friendship for the price of a defense treaty, a bar of chocolate, a carton of cigarettes, or a shipment of steel. The presumption is one that events sooner or later have a way of proving abruptly wrong, but it was also one that we had good reason to dress up in the monumental sculptures of ageless wisdom and certain truth. Men of broad understanding and generous impulse, several of them members of the Council on Foreign Relations, organized the Marshall Plan as well as the innu-

merable instruments of public policy and private charity through which the United States distributed grain, bank credit, technology, and lofty sentiment to the less-favored nations of the earth. Setting aside as irrelevant the objection that the United States hoped to make the world safe not only for democracy but also for the multinational corporations traded on the New York Stock Exchange, the notion of a Pax Economica served to answer all the questions at hand. Fifty years later, the expressions of American goodwill have begun to take on the character of ransom payments.

Our generosity achieved its most impressive effects among those nations previously endowed with a tradition of wealth, trade, industry, and education. Western Europe prospered, and so did Japan. But the countries that in 1945 were poor, agricultural, and illiterate remain as they were before the advent of American idealism—still illiterate and poor, still dependent on foreign bank loans, and the distinction between the haves and the have-nots begins to take on the aspect of a terrible permanence. The world's misery multiplies at an exponential rate, and among people with little to hope for and nowhere to go, the choice between peace and war presents itself as a tactical rather than a moral question. If the United States still had enough money to fill all the empty suitcases likely to be brought to Washington in the next twenty years, maybe we could continue to afford the pleasant abstractions customary among people rich enough to make of their wealth a substitute for courage or thought. Most Americans, like the students in the ballroom and their senior officers in the drawing room, find themselves morally disarmed when confronted by the visible suffering of people who haven't much chance of life, let alone liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Lacking the cash to pay the ransoms, what do we offer in its place? How do we preserve the fiction of our innocence? On what ethical ground do we justify our prosperity and defend what remains of our freedom? The questions are moral ones and therefore unpleasant, and for the time being it is easier to put them off until next Tuesday, or postpone them to the next presidential election, or reserve them for a really impressive occasion—a war between Israel and Iran, say, or the firebombing of Moscow.

On the morning after Boutros-Ghali's speech, the signs and portents in the newspapers were no less ominous than they had been in mid-January—at least half the states within the old Soviet Union threatening to secede from the new Russian Federation, an earthquake in Japan and a new war in Peru, the U.N. estimating the annual profits of the international crime syndicates at $750 billion—but I could take comfort in the thought that they could be safely ignored, at least for the time being, and that with a little luck and a clever advertising campaign, the dealers in miracles and redemptions could look forward to an era of unparalleled prosperity. ■




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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of years O. J. Simpson's trial would have to last before his legal fees exceeded this year's federal budget : 348,985

Ratio of this year's federal budget to the average annual budget during World War II, in 1995 dollars : 2:1

Amount of this year's defense budget that the General Accounting Office cites as not "adequately justified" : $6,800,000,000

Change since last year in federal funds budgeted for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty : +$19,675,000

Chances that a Russian favors independence for Chechnya : 3 in 4

Years it took Russia to win its armed conflict with the Chechens during the last century : 47

Ratio of Palestinians to Israelis killed in political violence since the signing of the self-rule accord in 1993 : 2:1

Estimated number of Iraqi and Kuwaiti civilians killed by unexploded allied cluster bombs since the end of the Gulf War : 1,600

Ratio of the combined GDP of all Arab countries in the Persian Gulf to that of Belgium : 1:1

Chances that a Swiss army knife produced this year will be bought by the Swiss Army : 1 in 400

Number of government-run injection rooms, or *Fixerstübli*, available to heroin addicts in Switzerland : 11

Chances that a first-year U.S. college student favors the legalization of marijuana : 1 in 3

Chances that a student believes that courts show "too much concern" for criminals : 3 in 4

Number of lawsuits for civil-rights violations filed by U.S. prison inmates last year : 37,419

Rank of New York among states with the highest incidence of wrongful execution between 1900 and 1965 : 1

Number of earthquakes measuring between 3 and 5 on the Richter scale that have hit the New York City area since 1980 : 16

Number of times Governor Pete Wilson has declared a state of emergency in California since 1991 : 30

Percentage of Americans whose homes are equipped with a padded toilet seat : 26

Days in jail served by a Michigan man last year after being convicted of secretly videotaping people using his bathroom : 75

Percentage of Americans over the age of 65 who say that color is a "very important" factor in buying underwear : 30

Percentage of American adults under the age of 30 who say this : 11

Chances that the father of a baby born to a 15-year-old mother is over the age of 20 : 1 in 3

Change since 1985 in the annual number of girls under the age of 15 who have abortions : –4,700

Change in the annual number who give birth : +1,794

Number of the 4 states with the highest illegitimacy rate that are also among the top 4 in welfare recipients per capita : 0

Rank of Manhattan among U.S. counties with the largest income gap between rich and poor : 2

Year in which Kalawao, Hawaii, the county with the largest income gap, ceased functioning as a leper colony : 1969

Number of Veterans Administration employees whose salaries exceed $100,000 per year : 7,367

Number of National Public Radio employees whose salaries exceed $100,000 : 6

Percentage of all U.S. corporate sponsorship that goes to the arts : 6

Percentage that goes to sports : 65

Average age of the 3 white professional athletes with the largest incomes in the United States last year : 51

Average age of the 3 black professional athletes with the largest incomes : 27

Percentage change since last summer in the market value of a Nolan Ryan rookie baseball card : –25

Percentage change since 1983 in the number of jobs in the U.S. film-production industry : +40

Ratio of the number of G-rated feature films released by U.S. studios in 1988 to the number released last year : 2:5

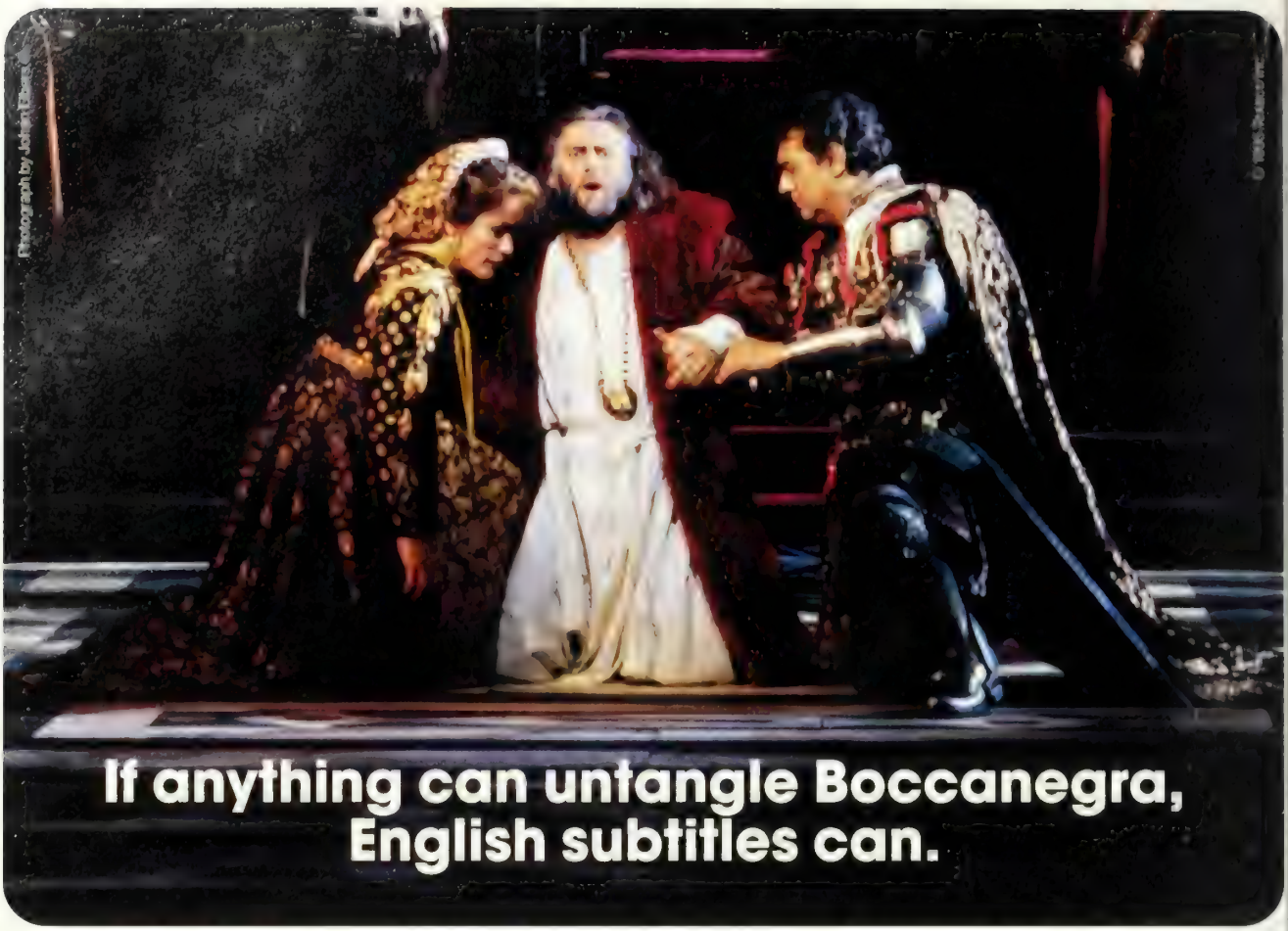
Number of the 29 divorced members of the House of Representatives who are Democrats : 21

Percentage of Americans who say they would allow their spouse to have sex with a stranger in exchange for $1 million : 10

Price of a portable dungeon from Master RR's, a Toronto company : $1,750

Rank of April among all months in order of cruelty : 1

Figures cited are the latest available as of February 1995. Sources are listed on page 88.
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READINGS

[Congressional Testimony]

RELEASING WOLVES FROM SYMBOLISM

From testimony given in January by Renée Askins at a House Committee on Resources hearing on the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park and the central Idaho wilderness. In January the Department of the Interior flew twenty-nine wolves from Canada to the two sites. Fifteen were released directly into the Idaho wilderness; the rest were put into pens in Yellowstone and were scheduled to be released after an acclimation period of six to twelve weeks. Two weeks after the wolves were brought to the United States, Representatives Helen Chenoweth (R., Idaho) and Barbara Cubin (R., Wyo.) requested the hearing, citing "unanswered questions about virtually every aspect of this misguided experiment that is being forced on our states." Askins is executive director of the Wolf Fund, an organization based in Moose, Wyoming, that is working for the return of wolves to Yellowstone.

If I were a rancher I probably would not want wolves returned to the West. If I faced the conditions that ranchers face in the West—falling stock prices, rising taxes, prolonged drought, and a nation that is eating less beef and wearing more synthetics—I would not want to add wolves to my woes. If I were a rancher in Montana, Idaho, or Wyoming in 1995, watching my neighbors give up and my way of life fade away, I would be afraid and I would be angry. I would want to blame something, to fight something, even kill something.

The wolf is an ideal target: it is tangible, it is blamable, and it is real. Or is it? When ranchers talk about wolves they say, "You know, it's not the wolves we're worried about, it's what the wolves represent; it's not what they'll do, it's what they mean." Wolves mean changes. Wolves mean challenges to the old ways of doing things. Wolves mean loss of control. Wolves aren't the cause of the changes occurring in the West any more than the rooster's crow is the cause of the sun's rising, but they have become the means by which ranchers can voice their concern about what's happening around them.

Ranchers deserve our compassion and our concern. Whether the threat of wolves is imagined or actual, the ranchers' fear and anger are real. I honor that. However, it is my job, as a scientist and an advocate, to distinguish fact from fiction and purpose from perception.

Ranchers claim that wolves will devastate the livestock industry in the West. Yet all the science, the studies, the experts, and the facts show that wolves kill far less than 1 percent of the livestock available to them. According to the *Bozeman Chronicle*, even if federal specialists have wildly underestimated the number of cows and sheep that wolves would kill in the Yellowstone and central Idaho areas, the actual total would be much smaller than the number that die each year in the state of Montana alone because of storms, dogs, and ovine ineptitude. In fact, the number of wolf-caused sheep deaths would have to be almost thirty times higher than predicted before it matched the number of Montana sheep that starved to death in 1993 because they rolled over onto their backs and were unable to get up.

In effect, the livestock industry has successfully transferred to the general public one of its most basic operational costs: prevention of predator losses. If you raise Christmas trees, part of the cost and risk of doing business is losing a few trees to gypsy moths and ice storms; inherent in the cost of ranching, particularly on public lands, should be the cost and risk of

losing livestock to predators. Instead, every year 36 million tax dollars go to kill native predators on our public lands so that private industry can make a profit.

It is important to remember that wolves are missing from the Yellowstone region only because we eliminated them. They did not vanish from the area in response to loss of prey or lack of habitat; they did not die out as a result of disease or natural catastrophe. We systematically, intentionally, consciously killed every wolf we could find (and we found all of them). And we didn't just remove wolves that killed livestock. The wars against predators at the turn of the century weren't about ridding ourselves of a nuisance; they were about the principle of dominance, and the wolf, the symbol of wild, untamable nature, was the object of conquest. We didn't just want to control wolves, we wanted to conquer them. So we didn't just kill wolves, we tortured them. We lassoed them and tore them apart by their limbs; we wired their jaws shut and left them to starve; we doused them with gasoline and ignited them.

Opponents of wolf reintroduction assume that because there are no wolves, there should be no wolves, and over the last two decades they have effectively framed the reintroduction debate around that assumption. They have promoted the idea that the return of wolves is somehow radical or extreme, some sort of environmental luxury, some romantic nonsense that only urbanites and rich Easterners advocate at the expense of the poor, beleaguered Western livestock industry. (In fact, surveys of the residents of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho show that Westerners support the reintroduction.) The industry's cry of economic loss has eclipsed the costs to the general public of not having wolves. In the West we now live in a "wolf-free" environment. Or is it "wolf-deprived"? Who has gained and who has lost? How do we assign a value to the importance of a predator in the ecosystem? How do we determine the cost of removing one note from a Mozart symphony, one sentence from a Tolstoy novel, or one brush stroke from a Rembrandt? Having wolves in Yellowstone is not a luxury but a right. We should not have to pay for clean air or water, nor should we believe that they are somehow a luxury. Similarly, we have a right to a full complement of wildlife on our public lands.

Because of the passion and politics involved, it is easy to oversimplify this debate. Just as unrealistic as the ranchers' scare tactics are the claims by certain environmentalists that wolves are sweet and docile animals; that the wolf is the ultimate symbol of harmony; and that everything noble, wise, and courageous is somehow embodied in this one creature. According to this view, ranchers, hunters, and industry are the bane of the environment, and saving the wolf, no matter what the cost, will be our redemption. Both environmentalists and ranchers have used exaggerated rhetoric to alarm constituents. Both advocates and opponents of reintroduction have tried to use wolves as the "line in the sand" that divides the old West from the new. Both sides want us to see this issue as a distillation of all endangered-species conflicts, as a simple question of either/or: don't touch a tree vs. clear-cut all trees; no wolves vs. fully protected, untouchable wolves; unrestricted grazing vs. no grazing. The tragedy is that while the armies fight their wars, the rest of America stands by, confused, uncertain, and unaware that something they care about might be at stake.

The truth, as always, lies somewhere in the middle. Wolves are not killing machines that deserve hideous deaths; neither are they cuddly creatures needing tender, righteous protection. Wolves survive by killing; they have an extraordinary and complex social system; they are smart, strong, and, at the core, consummate predators. Restoring wolves will not res-

[Resolution]

GOING WILD

From a joint resolution passed on January 31 by Montana's State Senate and House of Representatives.

Whereas the United States Congress has sanctioned the reintroduction of wolves into the Yellowstone Park ecosystem by federal agencies; and

Whereas most areas of the United States do not presently have populations of wolves;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that if the United States government is successful in its efforts to reintroduce wolves into the Yellowstone Park ecosystem, the U.S. Congress be urged to take the steps necessary to ensure that wolves are also reintroduced into every other ecosystem and region of the United States, including Central Park in New York City, the Presidio in San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.



"Untitled (Buffalo)," by David Wojnarowicz, a photograph of a diorama built by the artist. Wojnarowicz died of AIDS in 1992; in the late 1980s, he was one of the main targets of the campaign by Senator Jesse Helms and Reverend Donald Wildmon against certain federally funded art. "Untitled (Buffalo)" appears in Brush Fires in the Social Landscape, *a collection of Wojnarowicz's work, published by Aperture.*

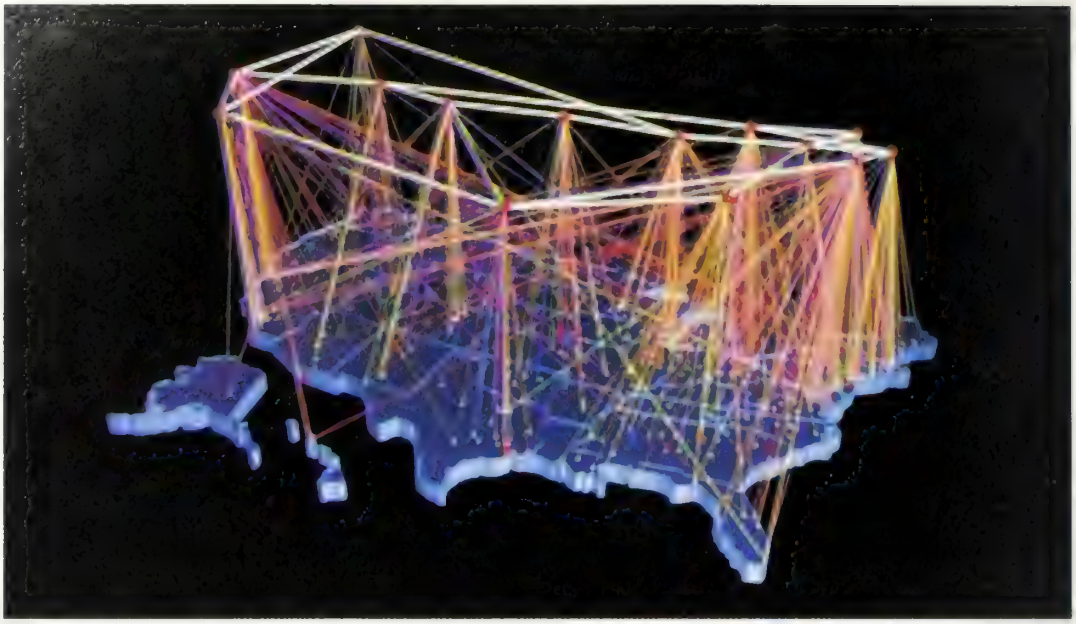
cue us from our economic or ecological troubles, but neither will their presence contribute to them. Some ranchers may indeed lose sheep or cattle to wolves. Some outfitters may find fewer elk for their clients to shoot. Yet neither ranchers nor outfitters will face economic doom due to the presence of wolves.

Emotions, not facts, have controlled the Yellowstone wolf debate. Wolves have never been just wolves: the wolf is the devil's keeper, the slayer of innocent girls, the nurturer of abandoned children, the sacred hunter, the ghostly creature of myth and legend. In short, wolves are symbolic; Yellowstone is symbolic; restoring wolves to Yellowstone is a deeply and profoundly symbolic act.

We are a culture of symbols. It is not surprising that ranchers and environmentalists use the symbolic force of wolves to debate painful changes. We distill ideologies into incidents, processes into people; we use symbols to help us order and make sense of an increasingly complex world. The Yellowstone wolf-recovery debate is fundamentally an expression of a culture in transition; it is the struggle that accompanies old assumptions clashing against the new. The story of this conflict is the story of how we view ourselves in relation to animals, whether we can replace the assumption of "dominion" that has been so destructive to us and the natural world with a worldview that recognizes that we live in a state of reciprocity with the birds and the beasts—that we are not only the product of nature but also part of it. Our attitudes toward wolves and our treatment of them cut to the very marrow of how we view our relationship to the natural world. Is wolf recovery loss or enrichment? Relinquishing or sharing? Wolves mean something to everyone. But in the end, wolves are only wolves. The real issue is one of making room, and there is still a little room in the West—room for hunters, for environmentalists, for ranchers, and for wolves.

[Map]

THE ILLUMINATED WEB



The map above represents the infrastructure of the academic and scientific portion of the Internet within the United States. The red dots indicate regional nodes that enable universities and other research organizations, represented by the white dots, to connect with one another; the color of the line connecting two dots represents the volume of traffic between those sites, ranging from white and yellow (heaviest use) to red (medium use) to purple (lightest use). The map was created by Donna Cox and Robert Patterson of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications based on data that the center gathered in September 1991. By the fall, the architecture shown here will be replaced by a more centralized version; the regional nodes will be replaced by four main hubs, run by for-profit telecommunications companies, through which all traffic will be conducted. The map appeared in Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture, *edited by Mark Dery, published by Duke University Press.*

[Rules]

FAMILY VALUES: THE GANGSTER VERSION

From the secret rule book for Los Solidos Nation, a Hartford, Connecticut, street gang that police allege is involved in drug production and dealing, prostitution, extortion, and murder. According to an introductory note, the book is "never to be touched by hands that are dirty" and should be "read and studied" by each gang member "at least twice a week." The gang, which was established in 1991, is Hartford's largest; police estimates of its membership range from five hundred to two thousand. Eighteen Solidos were indicted last October for racketeering and are awaiting trial.

SIGNED CONTRACT AND PHOTO

Every member of Los Solidos Nation will have a folder at Headquarters containing his photo, contract, address, phone number, position, age, etc. The photo is for identification purposes. The contract is required for your safety as well as the Family's. It gives us your 100 percent pledge to do your duties for the L.S.N. Any violation of this contract will result in termination, beat down, or even death, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

A signed contract also means that the Family is obligated to provide money, clothes, backup, lawyers, bondsmen, and so forth in your times of need. A contract also means that you say nothing about the L.S.N. to anyone outside the Family. Doing so will be a Class A violation.

THE LABS

A van will pick up our scientists and take them to the main laboratory for the making of our products.

A. Upon entering the lab you will be required to sign in.

B. Each package will be composed, weighed, and stamped at the lab. Then the

packages will be dropped off for the clockers [dealers].

C. Any lab worker can be subjected to a search at any time. Females will be searched by a head female and males will be searched by a head male.

D. Workers will be paid on a weekly scale. If overtime is necessary, a bonus will be paid.

E. There will be no phone calls and no half days at the lab. Full time only!

F. Security plays a vital role in our success, and we will not tolerate anyone speaking about our business or bragging to anyone outside the Family.

G. Absolutely no lab worker is to use the product being processed.

COLLECTORS

The collector's job consists of picking up all proceeds from all jobs nightly.

A. There will be a time set nightly for the collectors' arrival so that the proceeds will be ready.

B. Collectors will be held responsible for all money in their possession between pickup and arrival.

C. After the last pickup is made, the collectors must notify the accountant and wait for his arrival. He will count all the proceeds before they are locked away.

D. The accountant will notify Headquarters of the amount from each division and the total amount taken in.

AFTER HOURS

After Hours is designed as a club-type area for people looking for a party-type atmosphere.

A. Brothers and Sisters will be working as bartenders and waitresses. Enforcers will be present to keep peace within After Hours and to throw out those who can't control themselves

B. Everyone entering After Hours must leave all weapons outside. People entering will be patted down for weapons.

C. Brothers will be posted outside to watch for the police and to keep the area calm.

D. A few Brothers will also be assigned to After Hours to sell their product.

GATHERING

Roughly once a month there will be a gathering of all Solidos and their families. The gathering is held to strengthen Family ties and to give us a chance to meet Brothers and Sisters from across the state. It shall be a day for celebrating our love for one another. Cookouts, sports, games, and music will all be provided.

A. Members of the L.S.N. are entitled to bring the whole family—mothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, and so forth—as long as they are not affiliated with any other Family.

B. We guarantee a safe environment for everyone who attends. We will provide the necessary security. No weapons will be tolerated at the gathering.

C. Transportation will be provided for those who need it.

SOLIDO ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

As a Nation of Solid Brothers, our plans for the future are to have a chain of stores, have Brothers as lawyers, doctors, and politicians, and have our families be well-off. But we have to start slowly and climb this ladder of success and fortune gradually.

Our main objective at this point is to expand our Family into the mainstream of soci-

[Bio]

THE MANY FACES OF SUBCOMMANDER MARCOS

From a communiqué issued last year by a spokesman for the Zapatista rebels in Chiapas, Mexico, in response to a reporter's query as to whether Subcommander Marcos, the Zapatistas' leader, is gay. In February Marcos was revealed by the Mexican government to be Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vincente, a former college professor. A portion of the communiqué appeared in issue number six of City Lights Review, *published in San Francisco.*

Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristóbal, a gang member in Neza, a rocker in the National University, a Jew in Germany, an ombudsman in the Defense Ministry, a Communist in the post–Cold War era, an artist without gallery or portfolio, a pacifist in Bosnia, a housewife alone on a Saturday night in any neighborhood in any city in Mexico, a reporter writing filler stories for the back pages, a single woman on the subway at ten P.M., a peasant without land, an unemployed worker, a dissident amid free-market economics, a writer without books or readers, and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains of southeast Mexico.

[Analysis]

IS JUSTICE COLOR-BLIND?

From New Techniques for Winning Jury Trials, *by Dr. James Rasicot, a Minneapolis trial consultant, published by AB Communications. The book shows lawyers how to interpret the clothing, hairstyles, occupations, educations, and other characteristics of jurors and potential jurors in order to determine "who will potentially harm your case the most . . . and how best to gain rapport and credibility with individual jurors."*

One technique that I have found very useful in the courtroom is color psychology. There is a very high correlation between preferences for red, yellow, blue, or green and certain personality types. Those who prefer red (16 percent of the population) are dominant and unemotional. Yellows (8 percent) are free-thinking and emotional. Blues (58 percent) are traditional and compromising. Greens (12 percent) are analytical and uncompromising. Because of their leadership qualities, reds and greens are usually chosen to be jury forepersons. It is important to identify potential forepersons quickly during jury selection, because they will account for 25 percent of the discussion during deliberation.

Pay attention to jury patterns throughout the trial. General trends in color preferences are more telling than what someone wears on a particular day. Who is wearing the bright colors? Who is wearing the dark? You want to be able to understand the changes in the jurors' behavior and to predict what they will do at the end of the trial.

In criminal cases, blues and greens:

- identify with the victim
- are pro-establishment
- tend to convict

Reds and yellows:

- identify with the defendant
- are anti-establishment
- tend to acquit

In civil cases:

- yellows give the largest awards
- blues give money most often, but in small amounts
- greens give the least amount of money and are the most likely not to award anything at all
- reds are the most unpredictable; they give either all or nothing

ety. Therefore it would be good for you to bring your cousins, uncles, brothers, and friends into the Family so we can secure the backbone of our empire. In the process, we will be cleaning up our communities by making them into one big Family and giving our children a safer environment to grow up in.

The family and friends you grew up with are now addicted to drugs. Don't turn your back on them. Look out for them, put them in rehab, and give them a reason to better themselves. Show them there is someone who cares for them and a family they can belong to if they straighten themselves out. The majority of young males in our communities today don't have any family. That's why they're out running around and acting all crazy and foolish. But if you give them an opportunity to be part of a family, they will always be grateful to you and look up to you. They will be the kind of Brothers who will always be loyal to you and to the Family.

[Legal Bill]

A KING'S RANSOM

From an itemized bill for $1 million submitted last October to the city of Los Angeles by Steven Lerman, one of the lawyers who represented Rodney King in his lawsuits against the city and against the police officers who beat him in 1991. Because King won his lawsuit against the city, L.A. taxpayers were liable for his legal fees. In January, U.S. District Judge John G. Davies dismissed all fees for services unrelated to "the purposes of obtaining a favorable result for Mr. King" and awarded Lerman $221,000. Lerman later told reporters that "the intensity of the media coverage created the need to work twenty-four hours a day. What I billed was just a small fraction of the time I spent."

TUESDAY, 3/5/91

Contacted by Odessa King. Learned that her son, Rodney G. King, was arrested by L.A.P.D.; apparently he suffered beating at hands of officers; beating was videotaped by George Holliday. 1 hour, $325

Met with King at San Fernando lockup; advised King of his potential legal action and proceeded to obtain signature for retainment purpose. Time then spent taking photographs of King and advising him not to speak with anyone unless attorney present. Further interviewing of King. 1.75 hours, $568.75

Checked King into Ramada Inn in Beverly Hills after arranging for security and registra-



"Five Men," by Dan Witz, a New York City artist. The painting will be on display this summer at Saint Peter's Church in New York City, as part of an exhibition of Witz's work.

tion under assumed name. Lastly, said good night, 1:00 A.M. 30 minutes, $162.50

WEDNESDAY, 3/6/91

Arrived at 8:05 A.M. Calls from media—TV, radio, and press—had completely taken over my office. Office was insane. King case was all over the news. Every single station, in Spanish, English, all broadcasting the same story. I took every call I could from various media representatives; gave interviews to six different TV stations. It was my intention to put out truth of King beating, since it was immediately apparent that his case would be tried in the media. 12 hours, $3,900

SATURDAY, 3/9/91

Spent several hours at office, leaving at 11:30 to visit with King at Ramada Inn for lunch and in-room conference about my perception of case and its layout. 6 hours, $1,950

Returned home for much-needed rest. 30 minutes, $162.50

TUESDAY, 3/12/91

Arrived at 8:00 A.M. Pace of office was now quickened due to media interest, overwhelming my staff; reporters camped out in the waiting room hoping for a glimpse of King. Gave several interviews in office. 5 hours, $1,625

Received several additional phone calls from media; very careful in characterization of King's injuries, as I recognized that the delicate task of maintaining a proper image for King would be among my chief responsibilities. 3 hours, $975

THURSDAY, 3/14/91

King had surgery this day. Stayed at hospital from 8:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. 10.5 hours, $3,412.50

WEDNESDAY, 3/20/91

Met with King at hospital; King worried about blurred vision. I tried to explain that loss of sight can be easily related to recoverable damages. 3 hours, $975



"Chima Altar Ford 3 (Chimayó Dashboard Altar)," a painted wood carving by Luis Tapia. The altar represents the landscape around Chimayó, a town in New Mexico known for its santos, wood carvings of Catholic religious icons. It appeared in Crafting Devotions: Tradition in Contemporary New Mexico Santos, *by Laurie Beth Kalb, published by the University of New Mexico Press. Tapia lives in Santa Fe.*

TUESDAY, 4/2/91

Conferred with doctor's office concerning King's surgery; interview with Australian television media, 2:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.; 10-minute phone call with Federal Court to confirm filing of civil case. 3 hours, $975

King's birthday party at Park La Brea. 2 hours, $650

TUESDAY, 4/9/91

Conferred with Debbie from Phil Donahue show (re: proposed appearance) and Mr. Chang from *ABC Prime Time*. 30 minutes, $162.50

WEDNESDAY, 4/17/91, TO FRIDAY, 4/19/91

Trip to New York City for Phil Donahue show; King offered several quotations to use on air. Conferred with *Donahue* staff regarding format of show, taping. Taped show. Returned to California. 20 hours, $6,500

WEDNESDAY, 5/29/91

King arrested with transvestite and charged with running over L.A.P.D. vice squad officer in Hollywood. Damage control. All forms of media were now whipped into feeding frenzy; I tried to tie King arrest to L.A.P.D. harassment of King in beating case. 12.25 hours, $3,981.25

SUNDAY, 3/1/92

Reviewed all press clippings thus far in King case to develop appropriate media response. 9 hours, $2,925

THURSDAY, 4/30/92

All day spent with King trying to figure out correct response to riot; media image of King more critical now than ever before. Interview on Channel 11, one-on-one with Sam Donaldson. Did *Donahue*, *Larry King Live*, and CNN re: reaction of King to Simi Valley verdicts. 12 hours, $3,900

FRIDAY, 5/1/92

"BIG DAY"

Set up press conference for King. "Address the World." 6.75 hours, $2,193.73

Concerned about the [potential] use of videotape of King's plea for peace as evidence of his dysfunction. Analyzed "Can we all get along?" speech to show how King's mental process [had been] disrupted. 4 hours, $1,300

MONDAY, 5/4/92

Appeared on *Oprah*. 3 hours, $975

[Essay]

PROPHETS WITHOUT PAPERS

From "Illegal Immigrants: Prophets of a Borderless World," by Richard Rodriguez, in the Winter issue of New Perspectives Quarterly, *a special issue on "The Post-Nationalist Map." Rodriguez is an editor of Pacific News Service and a contributing editor of* Harper's Magazine.

We might have expected it in France, in Germany, or in Japan. But is America, the land built and sustained by immigrants, also becoming intolerant of them? Is that the message of the resounding vote in California last fall in favor of Proposition 187, the measure that seeks to end illegal immigration by denying government services to illegal immigrants and their children?

Let's face it: America has never really liked immigrants, at least not when the immigration was actually taking place. America ended up romanticizing the nineteenth-century immigrant, but only generations later. Today, illegals are an outrage to suburbanites in San Diego who each night see the Third World running through their rose garden. They are often adolescent, often desperate or reckless. They are disrespectful of American custom and law. They are also among the most modern people in the world.

The notion of the "legal immigrant" allows us to forget that all immigrants are outlaws. Immigrants violate custom; they assault convention. To be an immigrant is to turn your back on your father and your village and to break your mother's heart. The immigrant is as much a scandal to his ancient mountain village as to suburban Los Angeles.

Decades before wealthy Mexicans decided to enroll their children in Ivy League colleges in the United States, Mexican peasants left their villages and trespassed across several centuries. They grew accustomed to thousands of miles of dirt roads and freeways, knew two currencies, and gathered a "working knowledge" of English to go along with their native Spanish.

Before professors in business schools were talking about global economics, illegals knew all about it. Before fax machines punctured the Iron Curtain, coyotes knew the most efficient way to infiltrate southern California. Before businessmen flew into Mexico City to sign big deals, illegals were picking peaches in the fields of California or flipping pancakes at the roadside diner.

We live in a world in which economies overlap, in which we no longer know where our automobiles are assembled. We are headed for a century in which the great question will be exactly this: What is a border?

The illegal immigrant is the bravest among us. The most modern among us. The prophet. "The border, señor?" the illegal immigrant sighs. The border is an inconvenience, surely. A danger in the dark. But the border does not hold. The peasant knows the reality of our world decades before the California suburbanite will ever get the point.

[Announcement]

GENOCIDE, WITH ALL THE LITTLE EXTRAS

From a press release issued last year by the Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The Carlton Hotel is pleased to present a special package in conjunction with the popular U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Only a limited number of tickets are available each day to experience this haunting and moving museum; the Carlton offers its premier package featuring these exclusive and sought-after tickets. Other components of the "Weekend Museum" package include deluxe accommodations at our newly renovated hotel, a late checkout, and a lavish Sunday brunch, including a sumptuous buffet of appetizers and an array of delectable desserts. The brunch ambience is enhanced by piano accompaniment.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is dedicated to presenting the history of the persecution and murder of six million Jews and millions of other victims of Nazi tyranny from 1933 to 1945. The museum's primary mission is to inform people of all ages about this unprecedented tragedy, to remember those who suffered, and to inspire visitors to contemplate the moral implications of their choices and responsibilities as citizens in an interdependent world.

The Carlton Hotel was originally designed to resemble an Italian Renaissance palace and has recently completed a $27 million restoration, returning it to its former grandeur. The Carlton offers a complete exercise facility, individual safes in every room, twenty-four-hour concierge and room service, complimentary welcome amenities, and terry cloth bathrobes.

[Account]

REPLACEMENT PLAYERS, CIRCA 1883

From a news story in the September 23, 1883, New York Times. *The article is reprinted in* Early Innings: A Documentary History of Baseball, 1825–1908, *edited by Dean A. Sullivan, to be published this month by the University of Nebraska Press. According to an introductory note by Sullivan, in the late nineteenth century women were recruited to play baseball in "exhibitions designed to exploit the public's fascination with the bizarre."*

A BASEBALL BURLESQUE

BLONDES AND BRUNETTES
TOYING WITH THE BAT

A GAME IN WHICH THE GIRL PLAYERS
GOT HOPELESSLY MIXED UP
AND FURNISHED UNLIMITED FUN
TO THE SPECTATORS

A crowd of about fifteen hundred people assembled on the Manhattan Athletic Club's grounds yesterday afternoon and laughed themselves hungry and thirsty watching a game of baseball between two teams composed of girls. One side was composed of brunettes, whose costumes were of an irritating red; the other was of blondes, who wore sympathetic blue.

These young ladies, as the management of the affair announced, were selected with tender solicitude from nine hundred applicants (variety actresses and ballet girls being positively barred). They played baseball in a very sad and sorrowful sort of way, as if the vagaries of the ball were too great for their struggling intellects. Four of the girls had become expert—for girls. The others, however, had original ideas. They realized that when they got hold of the ball they ought to throw it, and they threw. They didn't stop to wonder where the ball was going, for they were sure that it would not go too far. Each one just raised her hand to the level of her ear and then sent it forward with a push from the elbow. The ball didn't seem to mind it much. At bat most of them preferred to strike at the ball after it passed them. Then it generally passed the catcher.

When the blues went to bat, Miss P. Darlington, pitcher for the reds, put another hairpin in her hat, seized the ball recklessly, drew back her right arm, and let fly viciously. Miss Moore responded gracefully by whacking a lively grounder to first base. The first basewoman made a wild grab but did not touch the ball, whereupon the runner got around to third while the other side pegged the ball all over the field. Finally Miss Williams went to bat and hit a daisy cutter to the shortstop, who promptly threw it as far as she could into right field. Miss Moore ran home. The next striker, Miss Myers, made a one-base hit, which brought herself and Miss Williams home, owing to the futile attempts of the entire opposing nine to pick the ball up from the ground. The next three strikers were put out, and the brunettes went to bat. Miss Evans, who rejoiced in bright brown hair, warmed one to right field and made it to second. Then Miss P. Darlington hit a fly to Miss Daisy Muir. Daisy looked up at the bright blue sky, and then the wicked ball came down and hit her on the little finger, and a look of premature old age spread over her countenance. She picked up the ball and threw it away. Miss Darlington ran home. Score of the first inning: blondes, 3; brunettes, 15.

Toward the end of the game the girls began to show symptoms of sadness and weariness and doggedly refused to run from one base to another until it became morally certain that the other side was hopelessly tangled up with the ball. Often when the fielders could not stop the ball in any other way they sat down on it. This was at once effective and picturesque, and never missed gaining a great howl of applause.

When five innings had been played and the hair and brains of the girls appeared to be in a



If Columbus had lived in the '90s.

From the Phoenix, Arizona, New Times.



From Mitsuaki Iwago's Kangaroos, *a collection of Iwago's photographs of Australian red kangaroos, published by Chronicle Books. Iwago lives in Tokyo.*

hopelessly demoralized condition, the game was called. The girls heaved long sighs of relief and started for the dressing rooms. The score was 54 to 22 in five innings in favor of the brunettes. They play again tomorrow.

[Diatribe]

ONE MAN'S COFFEE WAR

From Memoir from Antproof Case, *a novel by Mark Helprin, to be published this month by Harcourt Brace. Helprin is the author, most recently, of* A Soldier of the Great War *and* Ellis Island and Other Stories.

Coffee. When I look back I feel neither shame nor regret about my war against coffee, but sometimes I wonder why it had to be me, why I was the one who was chosen for a battle that cannot be won. Coffee has conquered the world; my only option is to harry it until I die.

How many people in this world have even the vaguest idea that coffee is the handmaiden of evil? Only a few. The rest go blithely about their business, smiling and happy under its spell. At best, they feel that it is neutral, neither good nor evil, merely a hot drink.

But coffee is a drug, a filthy, malodorous poison and an entirely destructive addiction. When I try to explain this to people, they're only amused at my distress, which pierces me to the heart. Coffee is virtually omnipotent: I have never convinced anyone, not even one person, not to drink it. People cannot even eat without it. They refer to it as *my*. "My coffee." On at least one occasion I have assaulted a waitress who approached me, asking, "Would you like your coffee now?"

"Madam!" I say. "It's not automatic! You assume too much! Just because you and most other people in the world are fiends and addicts does not mean that *I* am!"

Though I have made a thousand attempts at resistance and though I have as my model the French Underground, which ultimately was successful, I have not a single ally, not a single friend, and am doomed to fail. Coffee is more powerful than love, stronger than all the religions of the world combined, and perhaps stronger than the human soul itself.

I alone comprehend coffee's destructive nature. It disrupts the internal rhythm that allows a man or a woman to understand beauty in all things. It speeds up the metronome that rests within the heart, until the heart pounds forward like a locomotive off the rails. It blinds the eye to that which is gentle, shuttering the soul like a breech lock in a machine gun.

We are all perfect clocks that the Divinity has set to ticking when, even before birth, the heart explodes into its lifelong dance. If you doubt this, then why is it that a Carioca at rest



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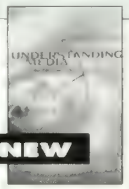
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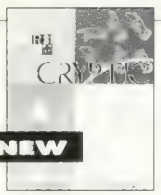
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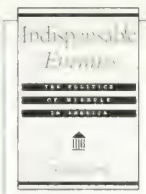
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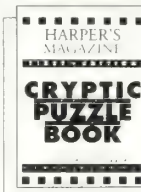
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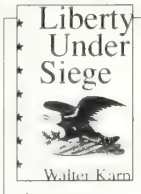
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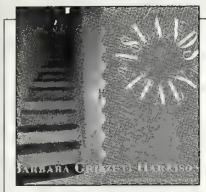
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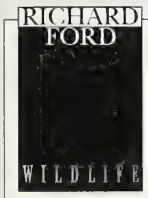
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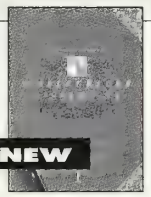
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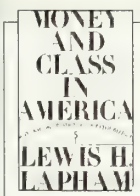
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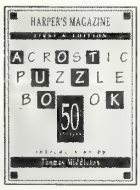
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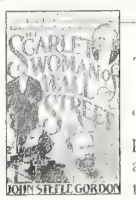
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will start to drum his fingers, and why is it that a composition of notes and intervals can make us cry, and why is it that when men and women are drawn together in a fusing of spirit and body, they move, they dance, they come together rhythmically, as in the ebb, the flow, and the rocking of the sea?

This drive, this beat, this universal tempo, is the most powerful thing I know. It overrides all calculation and greed, it runs gracefully past almost every imaginable sorrow, and it imparts harmony and sense to many things that, absent its insistent and flawless syncopation, would seem to make no sense at all. But when the metronome of the heart is driven forward, and the gentle pulsing of the soul is attacked with a whip, darkness and misery come like a storm.

I know this, though I have never had coffee. I know it because I have not allowed the rhythm to be altered, and I never will.

[Mosaic]

POPPED ART



The mosaic above, by Dennis Gephardt, made entirely of toast, is a portrait of Dr. John Gorrie (1803–1854), the first person to build a machine capable of freezing water. To create the mosaic, Gephardt toasted 143 pieces of white bread and glued them to a board. The portrait hangs in the David G. Rainey House in Appalachicola, Florida, where Gorrie lived. Gephardt lives in Tallahassee.

[Essay]

BURYING THE UNGRATEFUL DEAD

From "The Undertaking," by Thomas Lynch, in the December 22, 1994, issue of The London Review of Books. *Lynch is an undertaker in Milford, Michigan, and is the author of* Grimalkin & Other Poems, *published in England by Random House.*

Every year I bury one hundred and fifty of my townspeople. Another dozen or two I take to the crematory to be burned. I sell caskets, burial vaults, and urns for the ashes. I have a sideline in headstones and monuments. I do flowers on commission. I rent my building: eleven thousand square feet, furnished and fixtured with an abundance of pastel and chair rail and crown moldings. The whole mess is mortgaged and remortgaged well into the next century. My modes of transport include a hearse, a limo, two Fleetwoods, and a minivan with darkened windows, which our price list calls a service vehicle and which everyone in town calls the Dead Wagon.

They die around the clock here, without apparent preference for a day of the week or month of the year; there is no clear favorite among the seasons. Nor does the alignment of the stars, the fullness of the moon, or the liturgical calendar have very much to do with it. They go off upright or horizontally, in Chevrolets and nursing homes, in bathtubs, on the interstates, in ERs, ORs, BMWs. And while it may be that we assign more equipment and more importance to deaths that occur in places marked by initials—ICU being somehow better than Greenbriar Convalescent Home—it is also true that the dead don't care. In this way, the dead I bury and burn are like the dead before them, for whom time and space have become mortally unimportant. This loss of interest among the dying is one of the first sure signs that something serious is about to happen. The next thing is they quit breathing.

Nor does *who* matter much either. To say, "I'm okay, you're okay, but him, he's dead!" is, for the living, a kind of comfort. It is why we drag rivers and comb plane wrecks. It is why MIA is more painful than DOA. It is why we have open caskets and classified obits. Knowing is better than not knowing, and knowing it is you is terrifically better than knowing it is me. Once I'm the dead guy, whether you're okay or he's okay won't interest me, because the dead don't care.

[Poem]

THE COMPASSES

By Albert Goldbarth. From the Winter issue of The Gettysburg Review. *Goldbarth is Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Wichita State University in Kansas. His most recent collection of poems is* Marriage, and Other Science Fiction, *published by Ohio State University Press.*

If the past will be seen to validate a current national image
of grandiosity, then the state will subsidize scholarly
archeological expeditions, historical research, manuscript
codecracking. And if not, then not. This is the earliest
formulation of how the state and the softer sciences
interrelate. The supersecret government project

shrinks the medical research team to under corpuscle-size
and then injects it into the subject's circulation (there
to ride the great blood rivers and micropinpoint the problem,
rooting it out completely at the subcellular level)
only if the health of a statesman or military commander
is in jeopardy; it's unthinkable they'd fund it

for the purely wonder-stuffed pleasure of learning
the body the way we'd paddlewheel up other unknown
interiors,
stopping to watercolor the spigoted caverns, meditate
inside an expanse of densely webbed and brambled parkland,
dig up a tussock, sing off-key, return home with a bag
of souvenirs. If I've been describing a poem (the tweezery

exploration of a self, until we disappear inside
the poet's system like a pill) it isn't one of the Old Ones: then,
the gods stomped lightning out of the mountain, and
the poem explained their impossible, Parnassian ways
to mortals; then, the poem was many-armed and
many-faced, and spake the Verities that govern us. Now,
—well, as Howard Nemerov said, "Every poet's middle
name
is Mimi." I'm here! I had grandparents! Look, I even have
a photograph of them!—much *triste* and *joie* and *frisson*
the size of a hatband. A poppyseed dinner roll. A condom.
A new age "healing crystal." A tear duct like an s-f
"wormhole" into alternate spacetime. This increasing

personalizing is the difference we see between the compasses
Blake etches gaping out of the Creator's hand (they *bind,*
he says, *the infinite with an eternal band*) and
the compasses Donne has stand for the love-hinged
parting of one specific couple glorying in their everyday
seventeenth-century soap opera. Don't

misunderstand me; the universe inside-outs itself
from anthrocentric to solarcentric, nations topple,
dinosaur ideas stalk the land . . . *of course* I cherish
the counterbalancing intimacies of the small
and finely calibrated lyric poem! Of course I love
each sesame seed and eyelash of its warbling. But

I think I was wrong, before: I think the governments
will fund that poem. Will keep its author regarding
the family album. While the iron wheel rolls imperturbably
over the hills, and the bucket-jawed scoops eat
empires out of a thousand tiny lives, and the planets
clink together inside a velvet bag on the fat hip of power.

Of course, the living, bound by their adverbs and their actuarials, still do. That's the reason I'm in business. The living are careful and often caring. The dead are careless, or maybe it's care-less. Either way, they don't care. These are unremarkable and verifiable truths.

My former mother-in-law, herself an unremarkable and verifiable truth, was always fond of holding forth with Cagneyesque bravado—to wit: "When I'm dead, just put me in a box and throw me in a hole." But whenever I reminded her that we did, in effect, do that with everyone, the woman grew sullen and a little cranky. Later, over meatloaf and green beans, she would invariably burst forth with: "When I'm dead, just cremate me and scatter the ashes."

My former mother-in-law was trying to make carelessness sound like fearlessness. My kids would stop eating and look at each other. The kids' mother would whine: "Oh, Mom, don't talk like that." I'd take out my lighter and begin to play with it.

In the same way, the priest that married me to this woman's daughter—a man who loved golf and gold chalices and vestments made of Irish linen; a man who drove a great black car with a wine-red interior—this same fellow, leaving the cemetery one day, felt called upon to instruct me thus: "No bronze coffin for me. No sir! No orchids or roses or limousines. The plain pine box is the one I want, a quiet Low Mass, and the pauper's grave. No pomp and circumstance."

He wanted to be an example of simplicity, of prudence, of piety and austerity. When I told him that he needn't wait, that he could begin his ministry of good example even today, that he could quit the country club and trade

[Missing Item]

LOST IN TIME

From a list of the "ten most wanted time capsules," issued by the International Time Capsule Society. ITCS, which is based at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia, was created "to encourage study of the history, variety, and motivation behind time capsule projects." According to ITCS, many time capsules are "lost" due to thievery or poor planning; it requests that anyone with information about missing capsules contact the society.

1. *Bicentennial Wagon Train Time Capsule.* This capsule, which holds the signatures of 22 million Americans, was stolen from an unattended van on July 4, 1976, before the capsule could be sealed at a special ceremony presided over by President Gerald Ford at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

2. *Corona, California, Time Capsules.* The city of Corona has misplaced seventeen time capsules over the last fifty years. City officials tried to find the capsules during the 1986 centennial but "just tore up a lot of concrete around the civic center," according to Corona's centennial committee chairman.

3. *The Gramophone Company Time Capsule.* In 1907 opera singer Nellie Melba buried her original sound recordings behind the foundation stone of the new Gramophone Company record factory in Hayes, England. The container was officially removed during remodeling in the 1960s but was stolen before it could be reburied. The whereabouts of these priceless master-pressings remain a mystery.

4. *The M*A*S*H Capsule.* This capsule, which contained props and costumes from the show, was buried in 1983 by cast members during a secret ceremony in the Twentieth Century Fox parking lot in Hollywood. A Marriott Hotel now stands on the site.

5. *The Lyndon, Vermont, Time Capsule.* This capsule, an iron box containing proceedings of the town's centennial celebration, was mentioned in an 1891 Vermont newspaper article and was set to be opened by Lyndon residents on July 4, 1991. However, after searching the town vault, bank, and library, residents could not find it. The capsule may not have been buried at all, at the time, some ceremonies were canceled because of rain.

his luxury sedan for a used Chevette, that free of his Horsehorns and cashmeres and prime ribs he could become the very incarnation of Saint Francis himself or Anthony of Padua—when I told the priest who had married me these things, he said nothing at all, but turned his wild eye on me in the way that the cleric must have looked on Sweeney years ago, before he cursed him, irreversibly, into a bird.

What I was trying to tell the fellow was, of course, that being a dead saint is no more worthwhile than being a dead philodendron. Living is the rub, and always has been. Living saints still feel the flames and stigmata, the ache of chastity and the pangs of conscience. Once dead, they let their relics do the legwork, because, as I was trying to tell this priest, the dead don't care.

And that is the truth, abundantly self-evident, that seems, now that I think of it, the one most elusive to my old in-laws, to the parish priest, and to perfect strangers who are forever accosting me in barbershops and in cocktail bars and at parent-teacher conferences, hell-bent or duty-bound on telling me what it is they want done with them when they are dead.

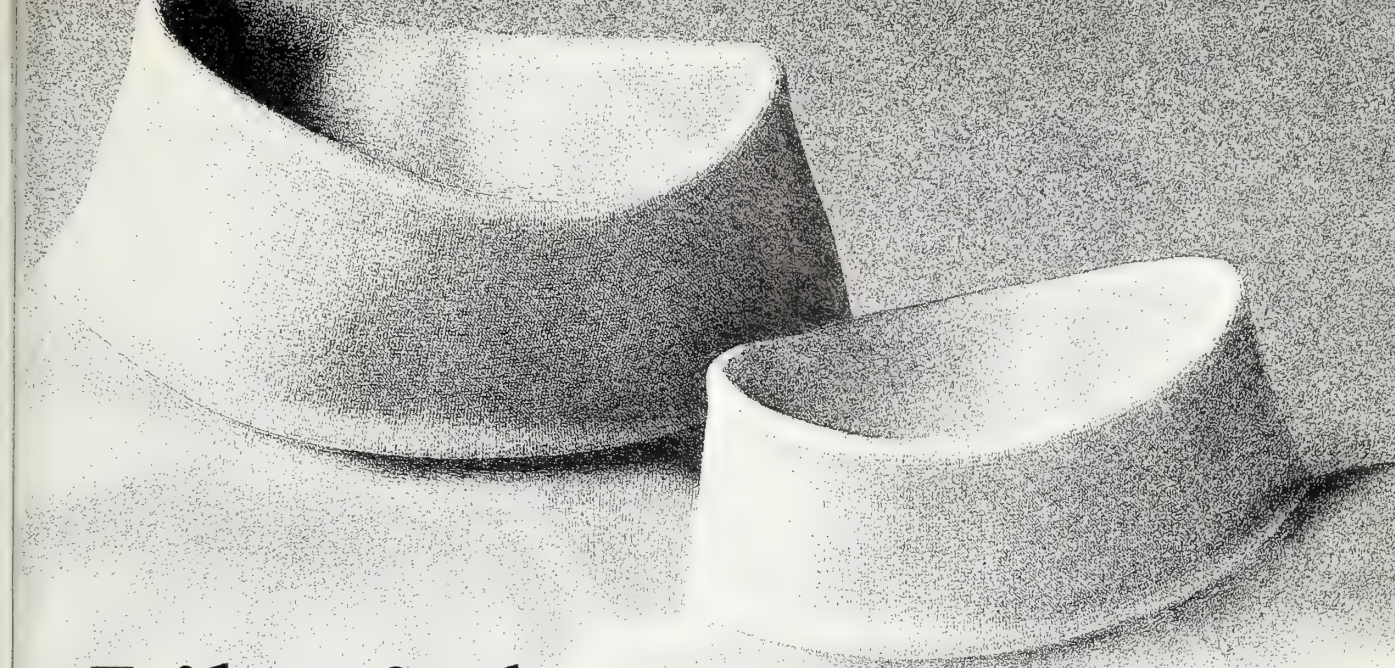
I say, Give it a rest. Once you are dead, call it a day, and let the old man or the missus or the thankless kids decide whether you are to be buried or burned or blown out of a cannon or left to dry out in a ditch. It's not your day to watch.

Last Monday morning Milo Hornsby died. Mrs. Hornsby called at two A.M. to say that Milo had "expired" and would I take care of it, as if his condition were like any other that could be renewed or somehow improved upon. At two A.M., yanked from sleep, I am thinking: Put a quarter in Milo and call me in the morning. But Milo is dead. In a moment, in a twinkling, Milo has slipped irretrievably out of our reach, beyond Mrs. Hornsby and the children, beyond the women at the laundromat that he owned, beyond the mailman, zoning board, town council, and chamber of commerce: beyond us all, and any treachery or any kindness we had in mind for him.

Milo is dead.

X's on his eyes, lights out, curtains.

I do not rush to my senses, coffee and quick shave, Homburg and greatcoat, warm up the Dead Wagon, and make for the freeway in the wee hours for Milo's sake. I do it for her, for she who has become, in the same moment and the same twinkling, like water to ice, the Widow Hornsby. I go for her, because she still can cry and care and pray and pay my bill.



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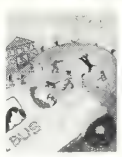
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The language of death certificates – Milo's says "Cardiopulmonary Failure"—is the language of weakness. We are forever dying of failures, of anomalies, of insufficiencies, of dysfunctions, arrests, accidents. Likewise, Mrs. Hornsby, in her grief, will be said to be breaking down or falling apart or going to pieces, as if there were something structurally awry with her. It is as if death and grief were not part of the Order of Things, as if Milo's failure and his widow's weeping were, or ought to be, sources of embarrassment. "Doing well" for Mrs. Hornsby would mean that she is bearing up, braving the storm, or being strong for the children. We have willing pharmacists to help her with this. Of course, for Milo, doing well would mean he was back in his hospital room holding his own, keeping the meters and monitors bleeping. I sign for him and get him out of there. At some level, I am still thinking Milo gives a shit, which by now we all know he doesn't.

Back at my place of business, upstairs in the embalming room, behind a door marked PRIVATE, Milo Hornsby is floating on a porcelain table under fluorescent lights. Unwrapped, outstretched, Milo is beginning to look a little more like himself—eyes wide open, mouth agape, returning to our gravity. I shave him, close his eyes, his mouth. We call this "setting the features." These are the features—eyes and mouth—that in death will never look the way they would in life, when they are always opening, closing, focusing, signaling, telling us something. In death what they tell us is that they will not be doing anything anymore. The last detail to be managed is Milo's hands—one folded over the other, over the umbilicus, in an attitude of ease, of repose, of retirement. They will not be doing anything anymore either.

When my wife moved out some years ago, I kept the children and the dirty laundry. It was big news in a small town. Although there was plenty of talk, no one knew exactly what to say to me. So they brought casseroles and beef stews, took the kids out to the movies or canoeing, brought their younger sisters around to visit me. What Milo did was send his laundry van around twice a week for two months, until I found a housekeeper. Milo would pick up five loads in the morning and return them by lunchtime, fresh and folded. I never asked him to do this. I hardly knew him.

After my housekeeper was hired, I went to thank Milo and to pay my bill. The invoices detailed the number of loads, the washers and the driers, detergent, bleaches, fabric softeners. I think the total came to sixty dollars. When I asked Milo what the charges were for pickup and delivery, for stacking and folding, for saving my life and the lives of my children, for keeping us in clean clothes and towels and bed linen, Milo said, "Never mind that. One hand washes the other."

I place Milo's right hand over his left hand, then try the other way. Then back again. Then I decide that it makes no difference, that one hand washes the other either way.

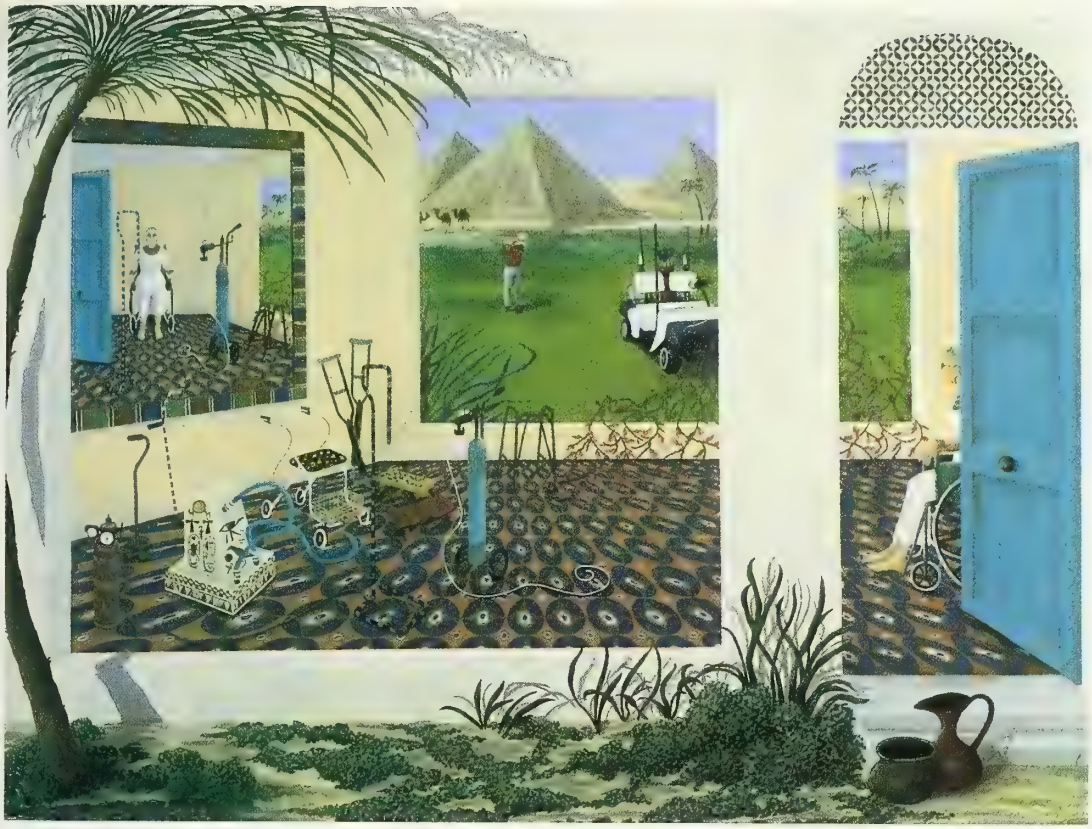
Every Monday morning Ernest Fuller comes to my office. He was damaged in some profound way in Korea. The details of his damage are unknown to the locals. Ernest Fuller has no limp or anything missing, so everyone thinks it was something he saw in Korea that left him a little simple, occasionally perplexed, the type to draw rein abruptly in his daylong walks, to consider the meaning of litter, pausing over bottle caps and gum wrappers. Ernest Fuller has a nervous smile and a dead-fish handshake. He wears a baseball cap and thick eyeglasses. Every Sunday night Ernest goes to the supermarket and buys up tabloids with headlines that usually involve Siamese twins or movie stars or UFOs. Every Monday morning Ernest brings me clippings of stories with headlines like:

[News Report]

A TRUE HERO

From "Hero Sandwich Deflects Bullet, Saves Shop-owner's Life," in the April 1994 issue of Modern Foodservice News, *a monthly newsletter published by Grocers Publishing, in Hackensack, New Jersey.*

A hero sandwich deflected a robber's bullet and may have saved the life of a Brooklyn man, José Fana. When a young man entered Fana's East New York deli, whipped out a handgun, and opened fire, Fana used a sandwich he had just made to shield his face. "He apparently had the sandwich in his hand and goes to cover up and the sandwich is hit and the bullet grazes him," Police Sgt. Anthony Barlanti said of the incident, though he declined to give the sandwich complete credit for saving Fana's life. Fana was treated at Jamaica Hospital and released. The hero sandwich was wrapped in paper and was topped with lettuce, tomato, mustard, and mayonnaise.



"Valley of the Kings," by Chicago artist Claire Prussian, on display last month at the Illinois Art Gallery in Chicago. Prussian lives in Chicago.

601 LB. MAN FALLS THRU COFFIN—A GRAVE SITUATION, or, EMBALMER FOR THE STARS SAYS ELVIS IS FOREVER. The Monday morning Milo died, Ernest's clipping had to do with an urn full of ashes that made grunting and groaning noises, that whistled sometimes, and that was expected to begin talking. Certain scientists in England could make no sense of it. They had run several tests. The ashes' widow, however—left with nine children and no estate—was convinced that her dearly beloved and greatly reduced husband was trying to give her winning numbers for the lottery. "Jacky would never leave us without good prospects," she said. "He loved his family more than anything." There is a picture of the two of them—the widow and the urn, the living and the dead, flesh and bronze, the Victrola and the Victrola's dog. She has her ear cocked, waiting.

We are always waiting. Waiting for some good word or for the winning numbers. Waiting for a sign or wonder, some signal from our dear dead that the dead still care. We are gladdened when they do outstanding things, when they arise from their graves or appear to us in dreams or fall from their caskets. It pleases us to no end; as if the dead still cared, had agendas, were yet alive.

But the sad and well-known fact of the matter is that most of us will stay in our caskets and be dead a long time, and our urns and graves will never make a sound. Our reason and requiems, our headstones and High Masses, will neither get us in nor keep us out of heaven. The meaning of our lives, and the memories of them, will belong only to the living, just as our funerals do.

We heat graves here for winter burials, as a kind of foreplay before digging in, to loosen the frost's hold on the ground before the sexton and his backhoe do the opening. We put Milo in the ground last Wednesday. The mercy is that what we buried there, in an oak casket, just under the frost line, had ceased to be Milo. It was something else. Milo had become the idea of himself, a permanent fixture of the third person and past tense, his widow's loss of appetite and her trouble sleeping, his absence in places where we look for him, our broken habits of him, our phantom limb, our one hand washing the other. ■

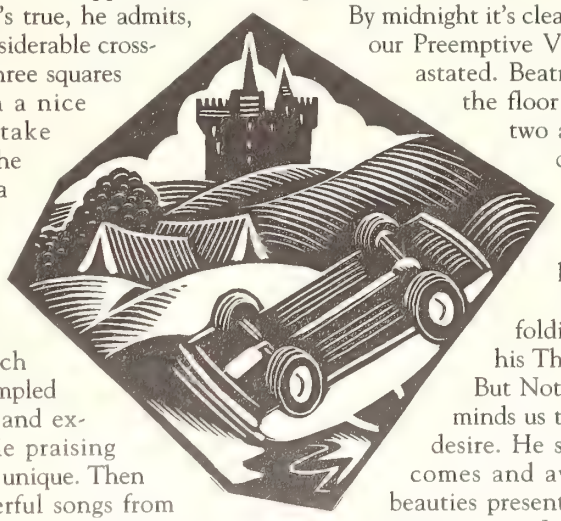

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BOUNTY

A Novella In Which a Genetically Flawed Hero Flees Through an American Dystopia, Evading Slave Traders and Regaining His Liberty

By George Saunders

Tonight at last the nation votes. In defiance of top management Father Oswald's set up his shortwave in the Rec Center. He says no matter how the vote turns out we've got to buck up. He says no matter what happens we've been blessed. Though it's true, he admits, that our burdens are considerable crosses to bear, we still get three squares a day, not to mention a nice chunk of change to take home and mull over in the privacy and security of a bunkhouse for which we pay zippo rent.



We try to go through our regular Counseling agenda. We talk about ways in which we feel neglected or trampled underfoot. We pair off and exchange neck rubs while praising one another for being so unique. Then Father leads us in cheerful songs from musicals. But nobody can concentrate. Finally he gives in and turns on the news: poll riots in Cleveland and three Flaweds lynched outside Topeka. The early returns are discouraging. The Western vote will decide it. Out there genetic purity is highly valued and Flaweds are generally considered subhuman trash, so things look bleak.

Father gathers us around him in a circle and encourages us to visualize losing so that when we actually do it won't hurt so much. Then he chucks each of us on the chin and says he's proud of our restraint.

By midnight it's clear we've lost. In spite of our Preemptive Visualization we're devastated. Beatrice Connally falls on the floor weeping. She's forty-two and sees the vote as a death knell for her baby hopes. Her wig goes askew and we can all see her huge scalp veins.

Father climbs up on a folding chair and gives us his The World Has Changed But Not Christ speech. He reminds us that what tortures us is desire. He suggests we take what comes and avail ourselves of the beauties present even in our reduced circumstances. Instead of having children, he says, plant and savor flowers. Instead of owning property, say a kind word to a neighbor with poor self-esteem.

"Bear in mind," he says, "that in time you meek shall inherit the earth."

"How can you possibly believe that line at a time like this?" Beatrice says from the floor as sev-

George Saunders's first collection, CivilWarLand in Bad Decline, *will be published by Random House early next year. His last contribution to* Harper's Magazine, *"Isabelle," appeared in the September 1994 issue.*

end of her comic hustle to get her wig back on.

"It is at times like these," he says, "that I believe most firmly."

"Easy for you to say," Beatrice says. "You're Normal."

"He's not normal," someone says. "He's a priest."

"No need for personal invective," Father says. "Although certainly I understand your frustrations."

Allan Burns makes a farting noise with his mouth from the back of the room. Allan's a cynical rebel with benign polyps all over his torso. He's nobody's favorite. Even sans polyps he'd be a pariah.

"In the best interests of all," Father says, seeming to enjoy ignoring Allan, "I suggest we go about our business as usual, observing the regular and sanctioned coping rituals."

The rest of us agree.

So he goes into the safe for our vials and we all toot up.

Later that night in the Castle 4 courtyard Bill Tiney's screaming at a group of Clients for letting his son die of cholera. Little Scotty Tiney's lying motionless on a wooden cart near the goat-udder bagpipist. He's not really dead, he's Performing. Makeup's done a super job of making him look deceased. The Clients titter and check their Events Schedules and a few who are really in the spirit of the thing start laying coins on Scotty's chest. I'm slated for Ribald Highwayman. When the Tineys are through I'm supposed to bound in and rob the women of the fake jewelry they received at Admission while comically ogling their cleavages.

My experience has been that when the rich pay for a Highwayman they expect a damn Highwayman

Just then Connie comes up the trail with Mr. Corbett. I duck behind a fake shrub. Connie's my sister. Corbett's a gigantic bachelor who made his fortune in antiseptic swabs.

"Say your husband's a burly peasant who'll kick my butt if I screw you," he says.

"My husband's a burly peasant who'll kick your butt if you screw me," Connie says.

"Wonderful," Mr. Corbett says. "Now fall down and let me catch up."

Connie pretends to trip. Corbett stands over her in his king's robe with his hands on his hips.

"You peasant girls," he says. "You peasant girls are all robust but naive as to the ways of the world."

Lying there, Connie scratches the side of her nose.

"Say my harsh words frighten you," Mr. Corbett says.

"Sire, your harsh words frighten me," Connie says.

"I like that," Mr. Corbett says. "I like that sire bit."

In violation of all specs I clip him in the neck with a rock. He just stands there looking stupid so I clip him again.

"I don't go for this," he says loudly.

So I clip him again.

"I'm not the kind of man who pays good money to be insulted," he says.

I clip him again and he makes a perturbed sound with his wet lips and stomps off. Connie gets up and looking out into the woods asks who's the smart-ass. She's mad because of the possible negative impact on her Performance Evaluation. But who cares? I'm still her brother. If she insists on having sex with rich guys for pay she can at least do it where I don't have to watch.

"I know it's you, Cole," she says. "If you love me, mind your own business."

Then she tromps back up the trail, cussing a blue streak and pleading with Corbett to come back and feel free to kick dirt on her. Meanwhile I've missed my cue by a mile. The courtyard's empty and the Clients are inside the castle making pigs of themselves while watching a troupe of Thespians bait an animatronic bear. I suspect my ass is in a sling. My experience has been that when the rich pay for a Highwayman they expect a damn Highwayman.

I go out to the retaining wall and climb into the guard station. Down in the tent town the dispossessed are having a hoedown. It's basically some floodlights mounted on gutted cars and pointed at a place where the dirt's been raked. For music they've got a fiddler and five or six earnest teens playing spoons. Some of the kids are floating paper boats in our offal stream. It may be offal but in the moonlight it looks poignant enough.

After a while a few of the kids get bold and come skulking up to the wall. I search the guard station, then fling down some contingency dinner rolls. The kids squeal and fill their pockets and stand there yelling thanks and begging for more on the basis of how many infants they have at home.

Finally I shout down that I'm out. They're sad about it and start back to the tent town with

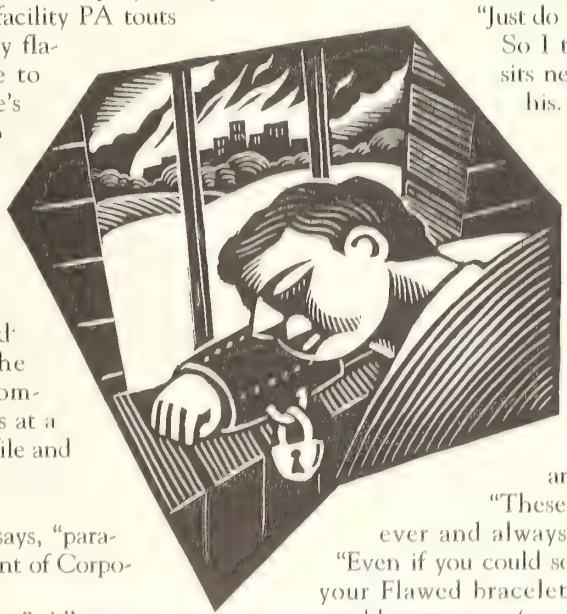
their crappy-looking shirts stuffed full of rolls.

"Smell one," one says as they go. "They smell so good."

▼

The moon rises. The adult dispossessed wander off in pairs to their little shacks of packing material as the fiddler stands on the hood of a car playing a sad good-night tune.

In the morning Mr. Oberlin wakes me up by paging me in a stern tone. I go down to Administration and he's sitting at his desk with residual black bean soup on his lips. He eats the black bean every Tuesday to prove he's a man of the people. It's an Employee staple. All day long the interfacility PA touts its down-home hickory flavor. They don't have to sell us on it since there's nothing else for us to eat. Mr. Albert's there too, wearing some kind of arts-and-crafts cardigan courtesy of his squeaky-clean wife. Albert's so stable and nice and generous he makes everyone uncomfortable. Oberlin points at a footstool with his nail file and says sit.



So I sit.

"Just for grins," he says, "paraphrase me our Statement of Corporate Mission."

"Give it your best try," Albert says kindly.

"To allow the deserving to experience an historical epoch unlike our own in terms of personal comfort," I read directly off their thirtieth-anniversary corporate ties.

"Whoa," Albert says. "Verbatim."

"Would you classify getting hit in the neck with a rock as experiencing comfort?" Oberlin says.

"I suppose what Mr. Oberlin's asking is," Albert says, "do you think that actual medieval royalty members were frequently hit in their necks with rocks?"

"Yes my friend," Oberlin says, "the Corbett cat's out of the bag."

"Tell me," Albert says, scooting his chair close. "Was this a political reaction to last night's vote?"

"No," I say. "He was degrading my sister."

"Albeit with her permission," Albert says, handing me a mint. "We have her signed consent form."

"Another incident of this ilk and you may well find yourself wandering the wide world sans income my friend," Oberlin says. "And no joke. Bear in mind that in your case we're talking about a young man who was practically frigging born here, and who has apparently forgotten the considerable deprivations and pains in the asses of existing without a potable water source, not to mention security from rampaging gangs that mean him harm."

"Wow," Albert says.

"In many senses," Oberlin says expansively, "I used to more or less like you in some ways. That's why I'm asking you to objectively regard your situation. Take off your shoes."

I give him a look.

"Just do it," he says.

So I take off my shoes. He sits next to me and takes off his.

"What I've got going here are toes," he says. "In your case, those may be fairly described as claws. Am I wrong?"

"No," I say. I could kill him for this. If there's one thing I'm well aware of it's the distinction between toes and claws.

"These feet identify you forever and always as Flawed," he says. "Even if you could somehow rid yourself of your Flawed bracelet, your deformed feet would scream out from every treetop the pertinent information on your unfortunate condition, by virtue of which, in the western portion of our nation, a man like yourself may literally be purchased and enslaved. Do I talk sense? Is this line of thought making a dent on your self-perception?"

"Yes," I say.

"Then why the offbeat actions?" he says. "Why the continual flying in the face of the hand that feeds you? One more screw up, mother, and I'm going to put you on the road to knowledge of how lucky you truly are in your present employment circumstance. And don't think I won't."

Clearly he's threatening Expulsion. My stomach tightens. I try to look resolved and chastened and like I have a secret plan for corporate bravado. Out the window I see the McKremmer boys practicing their act on the Field of Battle by whacking each other with polyurethane jousting sticks while guffawing like idiots.

"And if you insist on sighing while I'm talk-

ing sense," Oberlin says, "that too will contribute to my overall assessment of you as some kind of squeaky wheel seeking grease. As for your sister, you yourself should strive to be such an admirable team player or non-complaining spunky trooper. Which, mon frère, you are sadly not."

"And now for the bad news," Albert says.

"Inverse congratulations," Oberlin says. "You are hereby demoted to Table Boy."

"You've got to be kidding," I say.

"Company spirit, lad," Albert says. "It's the rudder on the otherwise wild boat of personal self-interest."

"Gleason party, Castle 2, three o'clock," Oberlin says. "Immerse yourself in your role. Try not to screw up."

I can't believe it. Table Boy's the worst Assignment I've had since I was ten and a Wandering Gypsy. Back then we'd approach some picnicking rich and Heloise Bremmer would start in on her sexy fortune-teller routine. Then I'd do my dance. It's a hard dance to describe but it involved my claws and a sheet of plywood. At night Connie would sing me to sleep and tell me not to worry because the real me was deep inside and safe. I love her dearly but in retrospect she had no idea what she was talking about. The real me was out there in tights, tripping the light fantastic for a bunch of soused vacationers. The real me was pining for my mother while showcasing my disability for a lousy buck.

Connie's lot was no better. At the time, hayrides through the Peasant Village were all the rage. Her job was to run behind the horses with a shovel and a plastic pail. The constant fecal contact made her sickly. Then she fell for a Client, the son of a transportation mogul. They met at the fake stream. He was having a smoke and reflecting on life and she was doing our laundry. By wearing baggy blouses over her bracelet she was able to deceive him into thinking she was Normal. For a week they snuck off into the woods and made big stupid promises. Then while touring with his parents he saw her hunched over a steaming mound with a look of concentration on her face and that was that. Her heart was broken. Shortly afterward she started going wrong. I'd find her drunk and wandering along the moat in just a corset, shouting obscenities at members of Grounds.

And that was nothing compared to the going-wrong that followed.

If you want to feel depressed, try watching your only remaining family member go off into the woods for a romp with a trio of law-enforcement bigwigs from Mahwah.

Connie's Flaw is a slight, very slight, vestigial tail. You can barely see it. After her jilting she went through a bad depression and tried to sand it off. She got a serious infection and was in the clinic for a week with compresses on her rear. When she came out she was humiliated and refused to speak. A week later she turned her first trick.

Sometimes I think of her at three years old on Easter morning, wearing a little coolie hat in the yard of the house on Marigold. We had a swing set. We had a bird feeder. We had a dog named Sparky. How we'd laugh as he'd caper around the yard digging at his anus with his mouth. When times got hard he was eaten against our will by our neighbor Mr. DeAngelo. Maybe it was for the best. A week later the militia took the house and we were driven out onto the road. Sparky would have been just one more mouth to feed. But still. Is it right that a couple of little kids should have to watch a grown, overweight Italian man cold-cock their father in order to bludgeon their dog to death with an eight-iron and roast it over an open fire? This was a man we'd seen swoon over a Christmas train set, a man who for laughs once ran through our sprinkler with a pair of underpants on his head. And there he was, weeping, dragging Sparky away by the paw. There he was, bellowing for his wife, cursing her for mislocating the Sterno cups, hacking up our pet with a cleaver in the shade of his bass boat. Who could forget his red-stained mouth? Who could forget him, satiated and contrite, offering Mom a shank?

▼

I

Connie's a prostitute, I'm a thirty-year-old virgin, but all things considered we could have turned out a lot worse.

go to lunch in my Table Boy duds. I'm halfway through my bowl of black bean when the Perimeter Violation Alarm sounds. Per specs I dash to the front gate, where a dozen members of Austerity are singing minor-key hymns and throwing buckets of black paint at our retaining wall. As usual one of them is dressed as Death Eating Chips to protest the re-emergence of wasteful packaging practices. Austerity considers us decadent. They hate the fact that we market opulence. They kill a cow per family per year and use every single part. They make candles from the bone marrow and pudding from the brains. They boil the fat to make soap and use the leftovers to grease their looms. Their faces are pale and they have bony knuckles and the women all look depressed and wear bonnets.

They're screaming up at us to reduce our Clients' per capita caloric intake. They're im-

ploring us to refuse our allocated narcotics so that we can see the power structure more clearly. They're calling us brothers and sisters and asking us why we honor the very mind-set responsible for the world's sorry state.

Oberlin's screaming back that they're only austere because they've got no other options. Gerard, Oberlin's behemoth Security stooge, says let's turn the fire hoses on the loudmouths. I fall in with the others and we wrestle the hose to the top of the wall. Gerard turns on the water and we blast Austerity back to tree line. Death Eating Chips stumbles and because of the weight of his head can't get up.

"Immerse that particular sucker in water!" Oberlin screams. "I desire you to make that costume inoperable."

So every time the guy gets up we blast him in the legs and he goes down in the mud again. The costume's coming apart. When it comes all the way apart we see that Death Eating Chips is a girl.

"Think!" she shouts. "Extrapolate your daily actions one-million-fold. Ask yourself if the things you do make sense. Then walk out of that Babylon and join us."

"Oh, shut up," Oberlin shouts. "Honestly."

She picks up what's left of her enormous head, then flips us off and rejoins her cowering wet friends in the grove. Singing "We Shall Overcome," they march back to their camp carrying homemade candles.

Gerard rolls up the hose and passes out our bonus cocaine.

"Heads out of butts, everybody," Oberlin says. "Fun's over. Unless I'm mistaken we still have valued Clients to transport back to a time of quaint enchantment."

So we toot up while jogging toward the Corkboard of Assignments. When we get there everyone laughs at me and pelts me with their empty vials because according to the Corkboard my first Table Boy gig is a SafeOrgy.

Nobody likes a SafeOrgy. A SafeOrgy fills you with longing and repulses you at the same time. We supply a sexy room modeled after a posh 1950s hotel. We offer BodyCons, since even the rich aren't above the STD epidemic. They like to let it all hang out and express themselves without any worries, like in the old days. Today I walk in with my tray, and seven shrink-wrapped Clients are rolling around on a heart-shaped bed with crooner music playing. We're not supposed to linger, just set down the cold cuts and get the hell out. But unfortunately a gorgeous overenthusiastic Client ruptures her seal. Our Employee Handbook requires us to perform a quick decon on the spot. There's a tank of soap mounted above the fireplace. She's all worked up, however, and starts groping me. I try to resist but she's strong. Nothing much really happens. She gets my earlobe in her mouth and starts sucking. That's about it. It's not unpleasant but I'm too scared to enjoy it. Finally I get her off me and manage

SEVEN SHRINK-WRAPPED CLIENTS ARE ROLLING AROUND ON A HEART-SHAPED BED WITH CROONER MUSIC PLAYING

to spray her from head to toe with soap. That cools her down. Maybe too much. As soon as she becomes aware that her boob's protruding from the shrink-wrap her cultural encoding gets the best of her and she starts looking down her nose at me.

"You reprobate Flawed animal!" she says, backpedaling and folding her arms over her chest. "This is going directly into the prose summary portion of your Evaluation!"

I immediately go over to Administration. This could be trouble. They could claim I molested a paying Client. But to my surprise Albert tousles my hair and gives me a cube of fried meat. The last time I had meat was four years ago, when a drunken Client singled me out for my subservient attitude.

"Never mind about her," Albert says. "She'll live. We've got something more important to discuss with you."

"Respect," Oberlin says. "That's the quantity I hope to imbibe to you during the confab that is to follow this present preface I'm extolling. Because my feeling is strongly that a man has the right to know the whereabouts of, say, immediate family members, should their life plans take a strong hiatus. So congratulations! Don't, therefore, think of it as losing an erstwhile sister, but rather as having her gain her dream of off-site cohabitation with someone richer than any of us, is my read on this."

"It's Connie," Albert says. "Corbett's bought her out of BountyLand."

"Bought her out?" I say. "What does that mean?"

"Albert's putting this thing in a non-romantic light," Oberlin says. "Surely there's love there."

"Oh, there's love there," Albert says. "Considerable love."

"And think if you will of the ranch to which he'll take her!" Oberlin says. "A finer ranch none of us will ever see, much less have as a love nest of sorts."

"When are they leaving?" I say. "Where are they going?"

"Six hours ago," Oberlin says. "His spacious estate, you lovable boob! Taos, New Mexico! Affluent as all get-out. Your lucky sibling! You don't think she'll be waited on hand and foot and eat like a true nouveau riche or captain of industry? She'll literally I feel be enmeshed in bonbons, not to mention a staff that loves her like one of their own and praises her personal attributes to the sky or what have you!"

"Are they getting married?" I say.

Just then Dad plastered himself across the windshield. It was the beginning of a bad ride

"Ho ho," Oberlin says. "What sweet naïveté of existing law you manifest, chum! But they're living together, and he's paying all her expenses, including the release fee due our facility, which will allow us to make considerable renovations to the Castle 6 edifice, which is crumbling, so don't give me whining. This is a boon, for us and for you and for her."

"As next of kin, you'll need to sign this release," Albert says. "A mere formality."

"In her best interests," Oberlin says.

"No biggie," Albert says.

"If I don't sign," I say, "does he have to bring her back?"

"Haw," Oberlin says. "No. I fake your John Hancock, then boot your sorry heinie over the wall whence you came in over, leaving you to free-associate with the hateful rabble for an untold future time period."

"Just sign," Albert says. "It's a foregone conclusion. It's what she wanted. Read this."

The letter's in Connie's hand. I can tell because all the i's are dotted with smiley faces.

"Cole, honey," it says, "can you believe all my hard work finally paid off? He says he loves me! A rich Normal and he loves ME! He says the other men in my past don't matter and that he wants to possess me totally forever. I'll miss you, but I know in my heart we'll meet again, hopefully at my place. A ranch! He said I could even have an economy car! Not to be haughty, but listen: Knuckle down and get something for yourself like I did. Don't be a dopey space cadet like Dad!"

She's signed it: "Love forever."

What can I do? Nothing's bringing her back. Maybe he really does love her. Maybe he's freethinker enough to see past her Flaw. Stranger things have happened. She's pretty and good-hearted and devoted and smart. Who wouldn't love her?

Oberlin rolls his eyes. Albert purses his lips.

I sign.

Good-bye, Connie.

I never considered Dad a dopey space cadet. He was a simple man whose only marketable skill was selling home water-filtration units via sincerity. Finally when the Third Panic was in full swing and every water source in the county became suspect, he started giving the units away. Mom said she considered herself as compassionate as the next person, but considering our household expenses and the scarcity of the filters, a price increase seemed more in order than a giveaway. Dad said she should try to understand that other people, even ignorant people, even poor people, loved their children every bit as much as she loved hers.

"Tell me something I don't know," she said. "The point is, I don't love their kids as much as I love mine. And mine are fed with the money you make from those goddamned filters."

Dad sat on the couch, looking wistful and kooky.

"It doesn't matter now," he said, staring out at the swing set, where Sparky as usual sat in the glider, his days numbered. "The old criteria such as cash will have no meaning within a few weeks. Good works are the ticket."

"We need a gun," Mom said. "For if someone tries to take the house."

"The people who come to take the house," Dad said, "will have more guns than you can imagine."

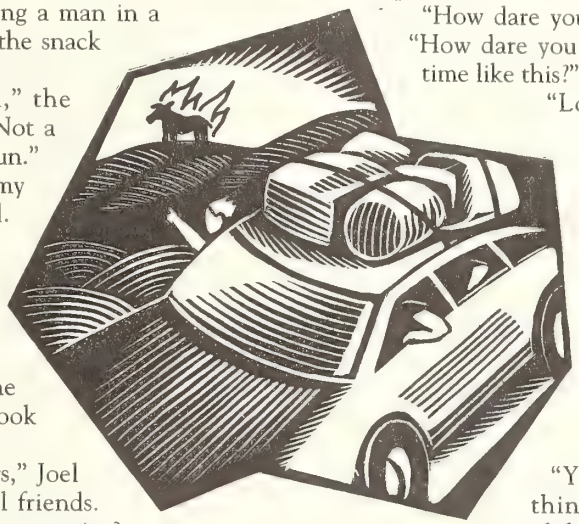
And he was right. They had guns and riding crops and mortars. They had a sense of high moral purpose. They had the sanction of the provisional government and a portable sound system that blared "Homogeneity, Sweet Homogeneity" as they purged the subdivision of any family with a Flawed member, meaning every family but the Quinces, whom they purged for fraternizing with Flaweds based on photographs they found of Mr. Quince teaching me to throw a knuckler.

Mom led us on foot to Sid Pornoy's Jovial Bowling, where for months she'd been stashing food and water in a locker. Dad followed meekly, making inane guesses at the wind chill.

"We're taking the Greyhound to Indiana," Mom said. "It's prosperous there. Flaweds are safe. Aunt Melanie wrote me."

"Why wasn't I consulted," Dad mumbled.

Obviously nobody was bowling. A man with a billy club was pushing a man in a silk jacket away from the snack bar.



"No kielbasa, Joel," the billy-club man said. "Not a link. No milk. Not a bun."

"You've known me my whole life," Joel said. "I'm your friend."

"Not a Pepsi," said the billy-club man. "Not a spoonful of relish. Not a sugar packet. The time has come for me to look out for me and mine."

"I am you and yours," Joel said. "We were school friends. Remember the caroling parties? Remember when Oscar called Sister Nan a tub? Remember?"

"No," the billy-club man said. "I mean really me and mine. I mean Bonnie and little Tom and me. Period. Not you. Don't touch my counter, Joel. Hit the road."

Mom loaded up the supplies and strapped the pack to Dad's back.

"Out of here," she whispered. "Out of here quickly."

In spite of the strife the stars were bright as crystal. A tailor squatted in his shop window with a machete and a *Newsweek*, waiting for looters. As we crossed the parking lot a van pulled up and the driver called Dad over.

"Keep walking," Mom said. "Ignore him."

"He's a fellow human being," Dad said. "Perhaps he needs our help."

The driver was a laid-off boilermaker. He talked to Dad nostalgically about what a friendly city Syracuse had been in the old days. Then he pulled a .22 and forced us into the van. He made us empty our pack. He seemed excited by our cinnamon rolls. He called Mom ma'am and let her keep her personal-hygiene effects. He took our money and he took our food.

"I'm sorry for this," he said. "I'm not a bad man. But my Pete. His little ribs are sticking way the hell out. Ever seen a starving kid?"

"Not yet," Mom said dryly.

The boilermaker's eyes teared up and the gun he was holding to Dad's head shook.

"I can't help it," he said. "I got to do it. You was smart enough to put some food aside. Anybody that smart'll be okay. Now get out. I got to go save my boy."

We got out. The van pulled away. Mom went into hysterics. She bent over double and started snorting. Whenever Dad got near her she elbowed him in the gut and said his ineptitude had killed us all.

"How dare you say that?" Dad said. "How dare you lose faith in me at a time like this?"

"Lose faith?!" Mom screamed. "I've had none for months. Look at your poor children. They're as good as dead. Picture our babies in shrouds. Because of incompetence. Yours. Their father. Whom they've always looked up to."

"Stop," Dad said. "You can't take those things back once you've said them."

"Come on kids," Mom said. "I'll save you if this milquetoast won't."

And off we went.

"Goddamn it!" Dad screamed. "I've done my best!"

"Pitiful!" Mom screamed back.

Her words were lost in the wind. Hanging signs were blowing horizontal. Mom dragged us up University. Dad stood talking to himself in Sid's lot.

"Look!" Mom screamed. "Look how he lets us leave!"

She stepped into the street and put out her thumb. A couple we would get to know well picked us up. These were the Winstons, also on their way west. It was perfect. They loved kids. They were glad to be of service. They had plenty of cash. Winston was a banker who'd kept his ear to the tracks and split in the nick of time with a trunkful of other people's money.

"Do you not have a father?" he asked.

"We do not," Mom replied.

Just then Dad plastered himself across the windshield.

It was the beginning of a bad ride. Dad got in and Mom folded him up in her arms and they wept together. A day later the Winstons put us out in the middle of nowhere because Mom and Dad rejected the Winstons' bright idea of a sexual foursome. I woke in the night and heard Mr. Winston making the proposal.

"What I'm putting forth," he said, "is that the four of us make some memories. Become fast friends and abandon starchy old mind-sets about monogamy. The world's gone crazy. Let's do the same."

"The answer is no," Dad said. "And I'm surprised I'm not punching you."

"I'm afraid our hospitality is not being reciprocated, Mother," Mr. Winston said.

"Some people don't understand about reciprocity," Mrs. Winston said.

"Then out now, you people," Mr. Winston said, and hit the brakes. "End of the line."

He too had a gun. Apparently in all the world only we did not.

So we got out.

"This is murder," Dad yelled. "It's freezing out here."

"Bla bla bla," said Mrs. Winston. "You had your chance. It would have been fun too, believe me."

"Really fun," said Mr. Winston. "Jeanine's a heckcat in the bunk department."

We stood in the bitter wind and watched them pull away. As far as the eye could see was frozen marsh.

"Maybe we should have gone along with it," Mom said.

"Bite your tongue," Dad said. "There'll be other rides."

"Famous last words," said Mom.

At midnight I wake to creaking floorboards. I feel a tug on my toe and in the sudden candlelight see Doc Spanner, in our lowly bunkhouse for the first time ever. Spanner's the facility doctor for Flaweds. Some people are put off by his drinking. Others are put off by his shoddy personal hygiene. I'm put off by his medical track record. Once when I found him soused in a ditch he admitted to being confused by the difference between hemorrhoids and piles. Still, he did a nice job with Connie's tail infection.

"I can't live with what I know," he whispers. "Listen carefully: this Corbett's a bad egg. When he tires of a woman he sells her to slave traders. It's a pattern. There've been a number of cases. Oberlin told me. I had some deep talks with Connie at the clinic and she struck me as a kind of a knockout and a nice girl. So I wanted you to know what she's in for."

"Can't we get her back?" I say. "Can't we just cancel the deal?"

"I expect you'd get some resistance to that from upstairs," he says. "Inasmuch as those turds have already spent the exit fee. My point is, someone working outside the system, exhibiting a little derring-do, motivated by strong emotions, might be able to effect a positive outcome. On the other hand, someone attempting to cross the Mississippi wearing a Flawed bracelet wouldn't exactly be greeted with open arms, and might indeed be greeted with open shackles."

He winces slightly at his wit, looks around, then pulls a key out of his pocket.

"My position has its little rewards," he says. "Every Flawed bracelet in this facility is within my jurisdiction. In the case of chafing and so on I'm allowed to perform a temporary Removal and apply ointment. Mr. Big Shot, eh? For this I went to med school. At any rate, this is a service I'm prepared to offer you."

I nod and hold out my wrist.

"Not so fast," he says. "I want you to be sure. The last thing I need is your death on my conscience. God knows I've got enough deaths on my conscience."

But it's really no decision. You grow up sleeping a few feet from someone, you see her little Catholic jumpers crumpled up in the corner, hear her wheezing with croup, huddle with her in the closet playing Bend the Hanger, and then you're supposed to sit idly by while she's sold into slavery?

I hold my wrist out again.

"You swashbuckler!" he says. "Have you ever got panache and verve and moxie! Exciting. I only wish my sister was a renegade whore about to be sold into bondage."

Then he removes my bracelet and hands me a prescription form with directions to Corbett's Taos estate written on the back.

"Kindly keep quiet vis-à-vis your source," he says. "If not, I may find myself expelled and forced to care for the hateful rabble gratis in some real-world clinic. Yikes, would that ever bite! Best of luck, pal. Keep your head down. Don't write me or I might get nailed."

For the first time in twenty years I can see my entire forearm.

I put some bread crusts in a knapsack. I say good-bye to my bunk and shelving. Then I go out to the guard station and climb up. What to do? Actually leave? Sacrifice my personal safety, my frame of reference, my few marginal friends, my job, my daily bread, my security, a lifetime of memories? My knees are shaking. I feel like throwing up, then hightailing it back to the bunkhouse for a nice bowl of black bean and my evening toot.

I think of Connie in shackles.

Then I jump.

And I'm free.

The stars jar as I sprint down the hill. Soon I'm upwind of the tent-town stink and can hear their domestic disputes and their brats screaming in poor grammar. I'm not ten feet from their barbed wire when a few young toughs recognize my khaki as corporate issue and wrangle me down to the ground while giving me a ribbing about health care benefits and the amount of time I've spent in conference rooms.

I don't fight back. Assuming they don't kill me first, they'll catch hell from Mayor John Garibasi. Last summer when his daughter got married I took a huge risk by stealing a cake from Baked Goods and lowering it to him on an ad hoc dumbwaiter. Unfortunately Garibasi's nowhere to be seen, so for several minutes my face is down in the dirt. The toughs remove my clothes and appropriate them for their own use. They let me up and examine the cloth. I sit there gasping in my skivvies and socks while some dispossessed women stand around critiquing my upper thighs.

Finally Garibasi shows up, wearing a threadbare blazer and carrying a surveying rod.

"Hey, hey, hey," he shouts at the toughs. "What the hell? How'd he get all bloody and naked like that?"

"We beat him up and stripped him," says one of the toughs.

"You ignorant pigs. No wonder you're not the fucking mayor," Garibasi says. "This is the guy who got Heather her cake."

Talk about an awkward silence. Talk about a bunch of strapping lads blushing and hurriedly giving me my pants back, then retreating to their tents. Garibasi apologizes profusely. I get dressed.

"So what brings you out with us disgustos?" he says. "You taking vacation?"

"No," I say. "I quit."

"You quit that cushy gig?" he says. "You must have a screw loose. They taking applications? Ha ha! So what do you want? A little money? Food? What?"

"Whatever you can do," I say.

"Tell you the truth," he says, "I can't do much. I got to think economy of scale. I got to think: what can you do for me? Fact is, nothing anymore. You got no inside connections now. Basically you're a nobody. No offense. The cake thing, that was great. But that's past. We're not rich here. We're fucking poor. You know that. You had it good for a long time. But now you're just like us. No pot to piss in. Hand to mouth. Wolf at the door and so on. So all's I can give you at this point is a handshake and a good-luck kick in the ass. And a bed for a week or so. A bed in a leaky tent. A tent we were going to throw out anyway." Then he stops and looks at my wrist.

"Whoa up though," he says. "I don't see no bracelet, so I'm assuming you're Normal?"

"Well," I say. "Not exactly."

"Christ!" he says. "I been standing here talking to a goddamned Flawed as if he had a lick of sense. Offer withdrawn. Get your infectious ass out of here and hit the road. Now. Jesus. Disgusting."

I'm shocked. We always got along so well. In the notes he used to throw over the wall he was always saying how much he envied and admired me, and telling me long personal anecdotes about his love for his daughter.

On the Thruway foot traffic predominates. Legions of the sick wait to die along the shoulder

That's why I stole the cake. That's why I risked my job.

"Did you hear me, shithead?" he says. "What's your Flaw, big balls of wax in your ears? No wonder nobody respects you people. Hit the road, freak. Be thankful I'm too busy to have you rebraceleted."

So off I go. Filthy babies sitting in the mud are swatting at passing dogs. Some entrepreneur drags in a muffler and men start pounding it into sheet metal with old shoes. Outside the camp the country opens up, all dips and rises and cool shadowed blue places. Two tan dogs flee across a dam of sticks and mud. Birds swoop over and their shadows follow like quick black check marks. What a beautiful country this must have been once, when you could hop in a coupe and buy a bag of burgers and drive drive drive, stopping to swim in a river or sleep in a grove of trees without worrying about intaking mutagens or having the militia arrest you and send you to the Everglades for eternity. I can't help but feel I was born in the wrong age. People then were giants, royalty, possessed of unimaginable largesse and unprecedented power to do good. What I wouldn't give to be drinking a Dr. Pepper while driving an Edsel and listening to Muzak on a Victrola. What I wouldn't give to be allowed to procreate in a home of my own and toss a ball around with my offspring before heading off for a night on the town with my well-coiffed wife.

Just after three I reach the Thruway. Foot traffic predominates. Every so often some elite guy chugs by in a motor vehicle, windows rolled up tight, and people fall all over themselves to either genuflect before him or lay goobers on his windshield. Legions of the sick wait to die along the shoulder. Wandering undercover bureaucrats whip out clipboards and assess odd taxes—bridge taxes and sleep taxes

and taxes for if they catch you eating weeds without permission. What used to be exit signs are covered with government propaganda banners. One shows a smiling perfect blond girl flipping a burger. Sneaking up on her is a lustful hunchback wearing a Flawed bracelet.

KEEP THE AMERICAN GENE POOL PURE! the sign says.

"If You Must Fuck A Flawed, Wear A Rubber," someone's scrawled over it.

I follow a herd of thin cattle driven by armed riders who whip people out of the way while chanting the name of the multinational corporation that owns the cows. I watch a tyke fascinated by the cowboys. He's so fascinated he wanders under a heifer and into the herd. His mom's at a food stall trying to buy hardtack in bulk at a good price by agreeing with

Armed riders whip people out of the way while chanting the name of a multinational corporation

the vendor that, far from being unattractive, facial moles impart character. The vendor has facial moles aplenty. The kid vanishes among the cow bellies. I wait for someone to notice but no one does. So I vault over the cows and grab the kid and vault back out.

The mother hugs my neck. A crowd gathers. The vendor tries to recoup his losses by shrieking insults at the cow.

"You'll be a steak!" he shouts. "You'll be a steak and I'll gladly eat you if you ever try to harm a human boy again! Hear me, fatty?"

"A man of courage," the mother sobs, "who risked his all to save my Ken."

"Forget it," I say. It's embarrassing. People are gaping. A smartly dressed stout man comes over and takes my hand.

"In these times, strange times that they are," he says, "seeing someone do something that's not patently selfish and fucked-up is like a breath of fresh air, good clean fresh air, not that any one of us would know good clean fresh air if a vial of it swooped down and bit us on the ass! Haw haw!"

Pretty soon the whole crowd's laughing. He hands out shiny quarters and confidently tweaks chins. He puts a big white arm around my shoulder.

"Life has been kind to me," he says. "So very kind. Damned kind. When I was about your age, I had an idea. I thought: these hard times have taken the wind out of our collective sails. People live like pigs. Time for a dash of luxury. And do you know what I did?"

"No," I say.

"I built mud huts for minimum wage for five grueling years," he says. "Ate bread crusts and never had an alcoholic beverage or a minute of relaxation. I worked every minute of overtime I could, cautiously saving my wages. Then do you know what I did?"

"No," I say.

"Just outside Erie, Pennsylvania, I built the most ass-kicking clean-air geodesic dome you've ever seen, and spent my last dime on rich soil and some ash saplings. Are you following me? Of course not, no offense, because that was *my* moment in the sun, the instantaneous showing-out of *my* genius, not yours. And the culmination? Do you know it, the culmination?"

"No," I say.

"GlamorDivans," he says. "A difficult period while my ashes came to maturity. Then whammo, Sector A gets buzz-sawed, my special team of overpaid but brilliant carpenters swoops in, and, before long, do you know what occupied the center of my warehouse under a special spotlight?"

"No," I say.

"Six damn GlamorDivans," he says. "Were their cushions specially handsewn by an incredibly talented seamstress I found in a rinky-dink tailor shop in Milwaukee? Yes. Did the ash shine under my spotlight like something from an earlier and more sane age? You bet. Did I tromp my ass off to identify loaded potential buyers? Yes yes yes. Did I own a car? Nope. Did I walk over five hundred miles and ultimately succeed in selling all six and buying a whole other load of ash saplings et cetera until I was the loaded and very happy man you see before you?"

"Yes," I say.

"Yes!" he says. "I thank God every day for the saga he gave me to live out. And now I say to you, because of the courage you manifested in saving that nameless brat: Want aboard? Want to change your life forever and for better? Want to be part of the GlamorDivan Team and earn five hundred dollars a month?"

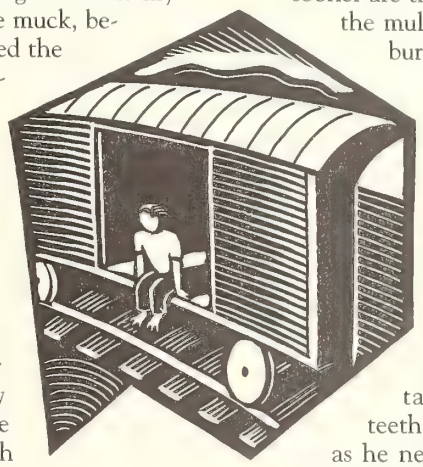
At the facility I made fifty a month and was the envy of every dispossessed who stood outside the retaining wall gaping up and swearing.

"I'll take that involuntary exhalation as an enthusiastic yes," he says.

I stand there nodding my head with my eyes watering.

"Here's the situation," he says. "I blame love for my woes. Not my love, but a barge guider's.

Over seventy GlamorDivans, bought and paid for, hang in the proverbial lurch because my pal Sid, whom I literally dragged out of the gutter, has met the woman of his dreams and suddenly loathes travel. So even as we now speak, some of Buffalo's wealthiest are sitting around in their parlors thinking: I hope old Blay didn't screw me out of four thousand bucks. And with each passing moment my name's sinking deeper into the muck, because buddy, I've already cashed the checks. It's routine. It's a cash-flow thing. Totally above-board. But all the same. My not-thin ass is in a sling, not that it hasn't been there a million times before in this catch-as-catch-can line of work, but at any rate my question to you is: do you have a hankering to see Buffalo or make me very happy or accrue some serious money real quick? If yes to any of the above, it's on the scooter with you and let's see you use some of that coolheadedness and courage to make us some loot. Ha ha! Life is good!"



His scooter's hidden under some branches. I climb on. We fly along the back roads. He's got a sweaty back and a nice touch on the curves. Scrawny subsistence farmers gawk at us and walk away shaking their heads as our dust settles on the brims of their economy hats. Finally we reach the Erie Canal, where two armed Flaweds guard his blue barge.

"Why the weapons? you might ask," he says. "The common man is my friend. I used to be him. But I'm not him now. You wave some beautiful household furnishings in front of the common man's nose, there's no telling what he might do. And these are *my* GlamorDivans. My body built those ten thousand mud huts. My signature went on the check for the saplings. Anybody fucks with my product, I sadly have to bite their head off. Or rather you do, in my stead. Shoot their heads off, rather. Whatever. Haw!"

"Sir," I say, "I've never driven a boat before."

"Who's driving?" he says. "You're pulling. I apologize. I realize this was mule work in the old days but hey, these are the new days, so we best turn up our collars and deal with the existing lemons from which lemonade may be made, eh? Ah, it's exciting to see a rich man in process. You, that is. Don't think of yourself as a surrogate mule, think of yourself as an entrepreneur of the physical."

I should have known. Mules are at a premium. Thousands have died of a bone-marrow disease. The ones that lived lost the use of their legs. You'll walk past a field and there'll be fifteen or twenty of them lying on their sides braying. High school kids get a kick out of pouring gas on them and lighting them up. It's a craze. The animal rights people do their best to prop them back up and slap on feedbags and post anti-vandalism signs, but no sooner are they back at headquarters than the mules are either toppling over or burning.

"There's ample grub in the hold," Blay says warmly. "It's good food. I'm a man who likes to eat. And here's two bills. The rest I pay on arrival in Buffalo. Mike and Buddy know the details. Meet Mike and Buddy."

So I meet Mike and Buddy. Their Flaws are dental. Buddy was born with no teeth and Mike has twice as many as he needs. Both smile at once. It's disconcerting. I look at the barge.

A nice barge.

Mike and Buddy take a cash advance and go into town to get ripped.

"Truly nice fellows," Blay says, "albeit none too swift in the head. Between the two of them they have maybe one third of a brain. Watch them closely. Rarely leave them alone. You're to be the thinker and planner of the operation. The nerve center. The guru. The Normal."

"I'll try," I say.

"You'll succeed," he says. "I can look at you and see a winner. Dream big, win big. Stick with me. Self-actuate. It's been a pleasure meeting you. See you on the other end. I'll be the one proffering a huge wad of cash with your name on it."

He gives me a hug. What a sweet man. He likes me. He trusts me. The way his girth makes him rasp even when he's standing still is endearing.

I sit on the deck of the barge with a semi-automatic. The water's brown. As per federal regs, all inflow pipes are clearly labeled. RAW SEWAGE, says one. VERY POSSIBLY THORIUM, says another. Dusk comes, an early moon pops up over the swaying trees, the barge slips around on its tether like a mild dog happy to be tied, and I help myself to some noodles and milk.

Noodles. Milk.

Freedom, I think: Very nice.

That night on the barge I dream of Dad. I dream the ice balls on his cuffs and the dried

blood on his face from when he fell trying to get us cornmeal from the Red Cross checkpoint. I dream him knee-deep in snow and cursing the Winstons.

When I dream it, I'm Dad.

Imagine: You're walking through a frozen marsh. Your kids are delirious with hunger and keep speaking aloud to imaginary savior figures. Sitting against a tree is a snow-frosted corpse. Wild dogs have been at it. Your son puts on the corpse's coat. It's bloody and hangs to his knees. You're too tired to tell him to take it off. Your wife sits on a rock to rest. You make the kids walk in circles to stay warm. You make them slap their hands

THE DAUGHTER RECLINES AND STRETCHES IN A PROVOCATIVE WAY, MANAGING TO CONTINUE SKINNING RACCOONS

against their thighs and recite the alphabet. You're scared. You love them so much. If only you could keep them safe.

Then through the trees you see lights. Up on a hillside is a neon sign and a floodlit castle tower.

BOUNTYLAND, the sign says, WHERE MERIT IS KING—AND SO ARE YOU!

Under the words is a picture of a crown with facial features, smiling and snapping its fingers. The sounds from inside are jovial. You smell roasting meat and hear a girls' choir rehearsing Bach. You run back and fetch your wife. She says she can't go on.

"It's all right," you say. "We're saved."

You drag your tired family up the slope. Because of the snow it's slick and the kids keep sliding down. At the gate a guard with a tattoo on his neck asks your monthly income. You say things have been rough lately. He asks for an exact figure. You say zero. He snorts and says get lost. You start to beg.

"Christ," he says, "I would never beg in front of my wife and kids. That's degrading."

You keep begging. He shuts the gate and walks away fast. You stand there a minute, then start back down the hill. The kids lag behind, staring up at the sign and hating you for being so powerless. The girl picks up a frozen clod and gnaws at it. Your wife tells her to stop but she doesn't listen. You hate your wife for being so powerless.

Kill me God, you think. Get me out of this.

Then there's an explosion and you tackle your family into a ditch and lie in the muck looking at the sky above the place on the hill:

Fireworks.

The fireworks get your goat and you drag the kids back up. At the retaining wall you tell them they'll understand someday. You hug them. They're so beautiful. Then you take the boy by an arm and a leg and heave him over the wall. He lands on the other side and shouts that his arm's broken.

"Daddy, don't leave me!" he screams. "Why are you doing this?"

Your wife starts up the hill, then gives up and sits in the snow.

Your daughter smiles sadly and offers her wrist.

Over she goes. She weighs very little. Your darling.

"He's telling the truth," she yells from the other side. "The bone's sticking out."

You must be a man of great courage to then turn and sprint down the hill weeping to rejoin your wife. You must be a man with great courage and a broken heart. Because until that day my father had never done a thing to hurt us. To hurt Connie or me. He loved us. On that we've always agreed. He threw us over to save us from death. He believed in people. He believed in the people on the other side of the wall.

We often wondered if he and Mom made it, and if so where they live.

In the morning Buddy cooks eggs on the barge. They're good eggs. He gums them. Bits fly all around. Bits get on his chair and the salt shaker. Buddy and Mike fart with impunity, making a big comical show of lifting their butt cheeks. I think about participating to win their respect but then Mike says it's time to start pulling. We each take a tether. We walk in a row. It's not easy but it beats toadying to the whining rich. At nine we take a break and apply salve to our shoulders and have some bottled water. Every now and then a kingfisher pulls something out of the muck and looks askance at it and eats it anyway.

We pull all afternoon through a region of discolored reeds. At dinnertime we decide to eat ashore. You can get lard cubes or bundles of spiced grass at Canalside stands. At a family operation near Lock 32 they serve raccoon on a stick, with a lemon slice. Where they get lemons in this day and age I have no idea.

Lowlifes are lined up behind the stand, hoping to suck a discarded rind. Raccoon bits are laid out on a card table. The vendor guarantees low heavy-metal content in the flesh. I

ask how he can be so sure and he says he used to be a toxicologist. His wife confirms this and produces a faded photo of him holding a cage of lab rats. Meanwhile their daughter's giving me crazy eyes while skinning raccoons. The toxicologist sees me looking. He says a beautiful woman is a joy forever. He says a dad can't be too choosy these days. Anybody Normal who'll treat a woman reasonably well is a catch. He says it's amazing how quickly moral standards eroded once the culture collapsed. He says: Look at your marriage rate. He says: A young fellow these days doesn't think family, he thinks pokey-pokey continually.

When he says "pokey-pokey" his daughter crinkles up her eyes at me.

"Best raccoon in New York State," the mother says. The daughter nods and takes off her filthy jacket and reclines and stretches in a provocative way, managing to continue skinning raccoons. The paws go in a bucket. Likewise the heads. The pelts are piled neatly on the towpath for later sale to furriers.

"So," says the mother. "That's a nice shirt you have on."

"You're traveling as part of your job?" the father says hopefully.

"Not exactly," I say. "I'm going to visit my sister."

"He's going home," the mother says. "Isn't that nice? A family boy. A family boy returning home after some kind of success. You have nice clothes. Your mother will be pleased."

"A young man out in the world, making the grade," the father says. "Such a young man was I, back in the toxicology days."

"Where will you stay tonight?" the mother says. "Probably a hotel. A very nice one?"

"They stay on their boat, dodo," the father says.

"This may sound nervy," the mother says, "but we would be pleased to have you stay with us. Why not sleep on dry land?"

"Don't push him," the father says. "Let him decide."

"I'm not pushing," the mother says. "I'm inviting."

"He's not interested," the father says. "Can you blame him? We've failed to provide her with decent clothes. What man would want her?"

"She's desirable," the mother says. "But you're right. It's all a matter of presentation. Do you see the form on him? Nice clothing does that. Highlights those good strong muscles. A healthy kid."

"Yum," the daughter says.

"Appearing wanton won't help," the mother says.

"It might," the father says.

"You'll stay?" the mother says. "One night? Please? Who wants to sleep on a smelly old boat when he can have some good home cooking and play some cards?"

"Why insult him by calling his boat smelly?" the father says.

"Oh God," the mother says. "Did I ever not mean that."

"Spend some time!" the father says. "Why rush across the country without absorbing the local flavor? Nellie will take you to see the boyhood home of Frank Shenarkis."

"Boy will I," Nellie says, and licks her lips. Dad nudges Mom in the ribs.

"Just so a man cares for her and respects her in the proper fashion," he says. "That's all I want for my little sweet potato."

"Take a walk, you two," the mother says. "Why the heck not? Get better acquainted. Make hay while the sun's still shining and all."

So we go for a walk.

The Boyhood Home is a pastel ranch on a street of pastel ranches. It's hard to believe America's Last Star was raised here. Just after the collapse of the national infrastructure, Shenarkis, an overweight Normal, reigned supreme on prime time with his depiction of Snappo the comical Flawed. Snappo's Flaw was that he had a Siamese twin named Tubby growing out of his waist. Shenarkis, a master ventriloquist, handcrafted Tubby from polyurethane and then made a fortune kowtowing to the least common denominator. Every week Snappo and Tubby vied in vain for the love of Carmen Entwhistle, the Normal knockout who employed them to maintain her grounds. Snappo was always either getting tangled up in her vines or knocking something irreplaceable into the pool. All intelligent Flaweds hated him for selling us so short. Carmen came to like him for his simplicity. At the end of each episode they hugged and Tubby would roll his eyes suggestively at Snappo. Finally around the time of the Detroit purges the feds yanked the show off the air because of the Flawed/Normal sexual overtones.

We walk through the Home hand in hand. We see the actual Tubby in a display case in the master bedroom, as well as the complicated harness system used to conjoin him to Snappo. Over the PA comes Frank's familiar voice singing his theme, "Two Heads and Hearts Falling for You, Dear." I can't concentrate. She smells too good. Her lower back is too rock-hard.

Finally they shut down the Home for the night.

"I never liked his dumb show," Nellie says as

we leave. "Dad said he got what he deserved for making Flaweds look halfway intelligent. But I did like the one where he thought the trombone was a scientific instrument. That one I liked because he was such a butthole."

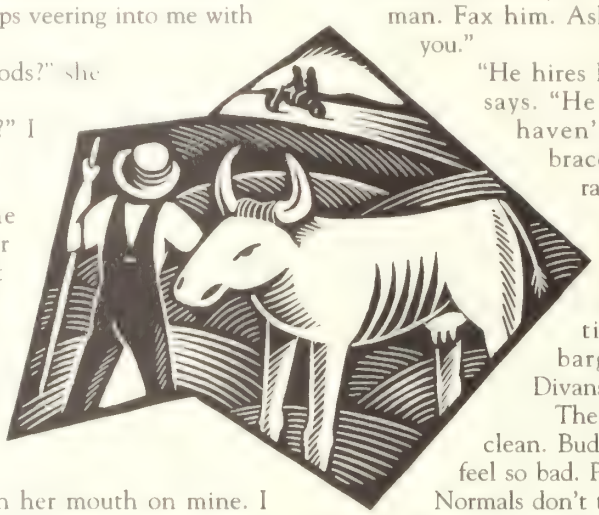
"I know what you mean," I say.

At this point I'd say anything. Her brown arms are hot. Our palms have a little river between them. She keeps veering into me with her muscular hip.

"Through the woods?" she says.

"Is it a shortcut?" I say.

"Nope," she says.



Ten steps in she pulls her blouse over her head. Her chest is sun-dappled and her pit hair is blonde. It all happens too fast to follow. Her breath thunders in my ear. She mounts me and screams with her mouth on mine. I feel a pebble being driven into my rear but I don't care.

Afterward she immediately says I'm the best she's ever had. She says our kids will be darling. She says she wants me again, only naked. She pulls off my shirt. I basically lie there like a flounder on a shore. So far letting her do what she wants has been rewarding. My shoes come off. Then my socks.

She stands up naked and starts wailing at the sight of my claws.

"Jesus Christ!" she screams. "I just boinked a Flawed, Dad!"

I pick up my clothes and run through the woods. Acorns lodge in my heels. Manly fluids sail off me. In spite of the fact that she was repulsed by the real me, I find myself thinking in wonder of her breasts and the ripples in her belly. I'd gladly marry her. Doing that every night would be a reason for living. But apart from the fact that I disgust her, I'm a fugitive. I've violated Disclosure of Flaws legislation. I long to hold her tight and say: You took my virginity and made me forget my Flaw. Let me stay. I'll tape my claws, or file them down daily. We could adopt. But what's the use? I saw the look in her eyes. For the first time in years I'm truly ashamed of my claws. How I hate them. Oh for a pliers and the resolve to pluck them out once and for all.

I sneak back to the Canal. Her folks are standing in front of the barge, along with a shouting mob of townies and a sheriff with a rifle.

"The way I see it," her father says, "we're entitled to whatever's on that barge."

"Oh no you don't," Buddy says, almost in tears. "This barge belongs to Mr. Blay."

"Take what you want, folks," the sheriff says. "I have no abiding love for Flaweds."

"Blay's not Flawed, sir," Mike pleads. "He's Normal as the day is long, and a nice, nice man. Fax him. Ask him. Please. I beg you."

"He hires Flaweds," the sheriff says. "He hires Flaweds who haven't been fitted with bracelets and go around raping Normals."

Rape? I think. Rape? But I don't budge. I like Blay but no way I'm getting lynched for a bargeful of Glamor-Divans.

The mob strips the barge clean. Buddy and Mike weep. I feel so bad. Poor Blay. No wonder Normals don't trust us. We're always screwing them over.

There's nothing to do. I could kick myself. I had sure transport west. I had a fat paycheck coming. I've let Connie down for a meaningless romp. I start walking. Far off I hear a train whistle. Then I hear bloodhounds. I run like hell through the woods and then along the tracks. A freight pulls through going slow and I run beside it. Holy cow, I think, I'm jumping a freight. I'm in a boxcar that smells like hay. I'm flying by a dark field full of baying dogs. The air smells like water and stars shine in the black canal as we fly across a bridge.

Next morning Lake Ontario's out the open door. The beach is littered with seagull corpses, which people are scooping up like mad for dinner. Fishmongers on the shore shriek at consumer advocates passing out pamphlets about the hazards of eating lake fish. It's Dunkirk, then Westfield, then Erie, then Girard. I lie in front of the open door and, as in a dream, the nation unfolds before me. You can imagine a hill, but an imagined hill is not actual, no clover smell rolls off it, no ugly dog chases a boy down it into a yard where a father is scratching himself before a chessboard set up across a bird feeder. You can imagine sleeping Ashtabula but no justice is done the earnest faces manning the security bonfire at the crossroads. Here a drunk shouts advice to a tree, here a fire burns in a field of alfalfa, here the train whistle echoes back

from a wall on which is scrawled: "Die Earnest Pricks." Near Cleveland I see a mob pursuing a cow past a gutted Wal-Mart. Finally the cow's exhausted and stands heaving on a berm. The mob seems unsure of how to proceed. Then some go-getter shows up with a crowbar. The cow takes a whack in the head, then discovers new energy and trots off again with the mob in pursuit. Fortunately at this point the train rounds a bend.

For hours we head west, through Sandusky, Port Clinton, then Toledo, where in a public park militiamen hold back the dispossessed with firearms while emptying Hefty bags of bread crusts into a fountain for public consumption. We pass through Angola and Elkhart, through fields of torched corn, then Chicago, racked with plague, where corpses are piled high in vacant lots beside the tracks and Comiskey Park is now an open-air penitentiary, then across the plains, where solitary people dressed in sacks wander across the horizon, reminding me of my own cursed family. Sweet-smelling dust fills the car. The nation goes on forever. I never knew. When old people said plenty, bounty, lush harvests, I put it down to senile nostalgia. But here are miles and miles of fields and homes. Nice homes. Once it was one family per. Once the fields were thick with food. Now city men assigned residence by the government sit smoking in the yards as we pass, looking out with hate on the domain of hayseeds, and the land lies fallow.

On the morning of the sixth day a family gets on in a hop-smelling southern Illinois town. The bearded dad offers me sunflower seeds and briefs me on his child-rearing philosophy. Discipline and other forms of negativity are shunned. Bedtimes don't exist. Face wiping is discouraged. At night the children charge around nude and screaming until they drop in their tracks, ostensibly feeling good about themselves.

"We ran the last true farm," one of the kids screams at me.

"Until the government put us out," the wife says softly. She's pretty the way a simple white house in a field is pretty.

"Now we're on the fucking lam," says a toddler. Both parents smile fondly.

"Indeed," the dad says. "My kids are at home on the American road."

"It's good for them not to be so staid," the mom says. "Get out and breathe the air."

"Live the life that's being lived," the dad says.

"Abandon the routines that conspire to force us into complacency," says the mom halfheartedly.

"Think of the memories they're accumulating," the dad says.

"Still, it wasn't a bad farm," the mom says.

"Darn it," the dad says. "Negativity, Sara. Nip it in the bud. Remember? Forging self-love by creating a positive environment. Remember? They took our home but they can't break our spirit?"

"Sorry," the mom says. "I forgot. I mean, it was positive, because I was saying how much I liked our farm."

I pick up my clothes and run through the woods. Acorns lodge in my heels. Manly fluids sail off me

"Never mind," the dad says. "I love you so much."

Still, he looks tense. He goes to the door and hanging his feet out tries to teach the kids "This Land Is Your Land." The kids are busy leaning out of the speeding boxcar and lofting spit at little houses along the tracks.

"Nice shot, Josh," the dad says. "You sure nailed that garage."

"Shut up, Dad," Josh says. "When you talk to me it screws up my concentration."

"Sorry buddy," the dad says.

At Springfield a nutty-looking guy in a dirty flannel shirt gets on and immediately divides the boxcar in half with bales. On his cheek is a burned-in crucifix.

"Some serious privacy's going to happen here or heads will roll," he announces. Then he takes out a huge knife and sets it just inside his boundary. Even the wild kids shut up. He stretches out to sleep.

Once the kids get used to him, however, they resume shrieking. One little guy in coveralls keeps reaching across the border to touch the blade. Mom and Dad seem perplexed. To restrain or not to restrain? The blade looks sharp. But why risk quashing his natural curiosity?

I stay out of it. Another fifteen minutes and we cross the Mississippi.

The knife guy wakes up.

"Touch it again, you're fucked," he says to the kid, who's about five. The kid's eyes go wide.

"Just a minute," the dad says. "That's my son whose self-worth you're bandying about. Don't you remember what a special place the world was when you were tiny?"

"Don't jack with me," the knife guy says, "or I'll be pleased to cut out and eat your whiny little heart."

"Pshaw," the dad says. "Sticks and stones, my friend. That kind of confrontational attitude does nothing but make me feel a lack of respect for you."

"Keep talking, nimrod," the knife guy says, "and I'll have me a woman for free and a bunch of brats to toss off a moving train."

"Hey now," the dad says. "Hey now. Is that any way to talk to another human being?"

"Sam," the mom says, "maybe we should just drop it. Maybe we should drop it and keep the kids on our side of the bales."

"No Sara, I don't think so," the dad says. "My family is not something to be treated with disrespect."

"We don't want any trouble," the mom says.

"No trouble at all," the knife guy says, then picks up the knife and goes for the dad. I make a grab for his hand and the knife flies out the door. He tackles me and rolls me over and starts biting my neck. He's strong and stinks and I can feel he wants to kill me.

Oh God, I think, now I did it, I'm dead.

"Fellows, fellows," the dad says. "Violence doesn't solve problems."

"Help him, Sam," the mom yells. "That nut's going to murder him."

"I'm not sure I can do that," the dad says. "I can't have the kids see me contradict my own moral system."

"Dad," one kid shouts, "get off your ass!"

"No," the dad says gravely. "Someday you'll understand, and respect me all the more for it."

Meanwhile the loony's biting deep into my neck and I'm starting to see stars. I panic. I thrash. Then we sail out the door and my head hits something metallic and I'm out like a light.

My new owner asks me what I like best about myself and hits me until I admit I like nothing

I wake up strapped to a stretcher propped against a dilapidated shack. The air smells like river and I hear chattering street merchants and the clang of pots. A thick man with long orange hair and bad acne pokes me in the ribs with an oar.

"Greetings!" he says. "Welcome to Missouri! This will teach you to go to sleep along train tracks near the Mississippi. All it takes is one greedy wino with a skiff and next thing you know you're chattel. Name's Chick Krennup. Want out of that contraption? How about a little exercise and some lunch?"

I nod. He unstraps me, then flattens me with one blow of the oar. I struggle to my feet and he knocks me down again. He asks what I like best about myself and hits me until I admit I like nothing. Then he asks what I want from life and keeps hitting until I admit I want nothing. He asks what I treasure and love above all else and I say Connie. He hits. I say Connie. He hits. Finally I admit I love nothing. Wonderful, he says, then hits me once just for fun. Who is this Connie slut? he asks. Nobody, I say. Wrong answer, he says, she's a worthless dirtbag and you despise her. All right all right, I say, she's a worthless dirtbag and I despise her. Then he hits me three times quick for selling Connie out so easily. He tells me to bark like a dog. I bark like a dog. He tells me to call him Most High and eat a handful of dirt. I do so. He fits me with a new Flawed bracelet and asks me who took off my old one. I immediately implicate Doc Spanner. He scribbles Doc's name down and pledges to get it to the proper authorities.

"Now," he says, "I should tell you that, appearances notwithstanding, I am neither an angry nor a cruel man. I do not dislike you and, if truth be told, do not for an instant buy into the idea that you and your kind are somehow inferior to me, or deserving of subjugation. Nevertheless, you will observe me to be, to say the least, the proverbial harsh taskmaster. Why, you might ask? In a word: Carlotta Bins. The most beautiful woman in Missouri, who because of my rough-hewn appearance has declared herself out of my reach, unless I impress her in some less aesthetics-based arena. And I have chosen my arena, and it is to be slave trading, which will garner me money money money, which will translate into power power power and houses houses houses, and a wardrobe suitable for my lady, the charmed, raven-tressed, irrepressible Carlotta. And you sir, you are important to me, wildly important, in that the price I get for you will enter my coffers, where it will sit garnering interest until such time as it is part of an absolutely undeniable nest egg. In keeping with my stated intentions, you will spend this evening in unpleasant solitude, thereby becoming further distanced from your true

self and more amenable to my every whim. This regimen of daytime beatings and lonely nights will continue until such time as there is nothing remaining of your free will and you have become the oft-cited putty in my hands, after which we will set out for Sarcoxie, where I will sell you and others of your ilk at tremendous markup."

He helps me up and guides me to a dank cage at tree line. He throws in some moldy ancient airline peanuts, then jabs me with the oar for not saying thanks. Finally he goes away. I sit ashamed in my cage. Who am I? I would have done anything to stop the hitting. Anything. So much for human dignity, I think, a few whacks in the ribs and you're calling a fat guy God and eating soil at his request. He was hitting me, I think: me. A nice guy. A friendly guy. The guy voted Least Likely to Object for three years running. Who in the world is he to be hitting me?

I long for a kind word, for a meal, for my bunk and locker, for BountyLand.

At dawn Krennup's leaning against my cage with a doughnut in his mouth. He opens the door and tells me to step out. I do so. He cracks me in the back of the legs until I'm down on my knees, then tells me to get up because I'm on the clock. Then he knocks me down again and with his foot on my chest explains that per Federal Mandate 12 I'm to be compensated for my involuntary servitude. However, I'm also to be charged for my food and water and for every minute he has to spend reprimanding me or beating me senseless or even thinking about me. Whatever money is left, which invariably will be exactly nothing, will be deposited in his bank account, for disbursement whenever he sees fit, which will typically be never.

He asks do I understand. Before I can answer he whacks me. After he whacks me I say I understand and it's all fine with me. He whacks me for volunteering information he didn't request, then ties me to a post near six Porta Potties slanting like bad lime-green teeth. Every half hour he comes out and beats me up. I get no food. I get no water. Whenever I fall asleep he sends over a lackey to burn me with a match. He parades his other Flaweds by and they make fun of my claws and spit on me and tell me to quit being snotty and join the club so we can head west. I humiliate myself by telling them I'd very much like to join the club and begging Krennup to untie me.

Finally after three days he does. I'm so happy I try to hug him and he knocks me down in the dirt with his oar and says my cheekiness has just earned me two additional days.

And when those two days are up I don't hug or thank him, I meekly shuffle, I flinch, I hear voices, I drool, I follow him into the trailer and stand on a milk crate in a crap-coated stall, where four elderly Flaweds check me for body lice, then dress me in coarse baggies and lead me to a wagon driven by Mollie, a hag whose Flaw is a colossal turkey neck.

She gives me a friendly smile while smearing antibiotic on her wattles, then hops down and adds me to a line of thirty Flaweds chained to the back of the wagon.

And off we go.

We plod through Eureka and Pacific, camp in a foundry parking lot, get up at the crack of dawn and start south again, past porches overgrown with lilac and piles of junk bikes being sold piecemeal for shack frames. It's Sullivan, Rolla, Hazelgreen, and Sleeper, where a field behind a former mall is full of singing teens digging roots by torchlight. The days are a blur of fences, distant hills, senior citizens selling moist towelettes on the shoulder. The air smells of fried chicken and coffee, there are laughing girls on porches, tumbling puppies chasing ducks, long tables of steaming food in the sunlight, but none of it's for us. We get eight Sterno-warmed pork nuggets and a sip of water a day. We get Mollie chirping about the beauty of the land while rubbing bag balm into our shackle sores. You'd think we'd devise an escape plan or share childhood memories while developing bonds of camaraderie to last a lifetime. But no. We slander one another. We bicker. We victimize an asthmatic ex-database guru from Detroit by stealing his nuggets whenever he has a coughing fit.

Finally we reach the Sarcoxie slave mart, a fenced-in mud patch behind a firebombed Wendy's.

"Best foot forward, folks," Krennup says, giving Mollie a playful tug on the wattles. "The sooner I sell you misanthropes, the sooner I get home and wow Carlotta with the profits."

All morning I stand on a stump as buyers file by. They take souvenir photos of my claws, using pens and matchbooks for scale. They note the cracked flesh and the swelling and doubt aloud my ability to handle fieldwork. They ask can I cook. I say no. They ask can I build furniture or supervise a cleaning staff or bake interesting pastries. I say no no no. By dinnertime it's just me and a set of Siamese twins and a few double amputees sitting hopefully on crates.

Krennup and Mollie sit glaring at me across the Sterno fire.

"Aren't we going to be able to get anything for you?" Krennup says. "Are you literally worthless? Those feet are so off-putting. It's frustrating."

"Maybe we could rent a power sander," Mollie says.

"Not to intrude, folks," says a buyer nearby wearing a wool vest, "but you're talking to this man in awfully derogatory terms. I don't even talk about my sheep so negatively. I have half a mind to buy this fellow and turn him into a shepherd."



"If you've got fifty bucks you can turn him into dog food for all I care," Krennup says.

"Oh come now," the man says. "What does a comment like that tell us about your self-image? You see yourself as someone who needs to sell someone else to a dog-food factory in order to validate yourself."

"Whatever," Krennup says. "Do you want him or not? Fifty, firm."

"Frankly I abhor this slavery thing. But you can't fight it. So I do my part to treat my people like human beings. My name's Ned Ventor. I consider myself to be working for change from within the system."

He smiles and shakes my hand, then slips Krennup a fifty and leads me to a wagon with padded seats, where four other Flawed men are sitting unchained drinking lemonade.

"Care for some?" he says. "Bagel? Please fill out a name tag. Attention all! What I usually like to do is hold a brief orientation session to get us all on the same wavelength. Any objections? Is this a good time for it? Great! Then let's begin with principle number one: I trust you. I'm not going to treat you like a slave and I don't expect you to act like one, not that I think for a minute that you would. Second principle: My sheep are your sheep. I realize that without you, the shepherds, my sheep would tend to wander all over the mountainside, being eaten by wolves or the dispossessed. Not that I have anything against the dispossessed, only I don't like them eating my sheep. Principle three: If we get through the year without a lost sheep, it's party time. We'll have couscous and tortilla chips and dancing and, for the main course—what else?—a barbecued sheep. Principles four and five: Comfort and dignity. You'll be getting hot meals three times a day, featuring selections from every food group, plus dessert, plus a mint. You'll each be getting a cottage, which you may decorate as you like, using a decoration allowance I'll distribute upon our arrival. Buy a lounge chair or some nice prints, maybe even a coffeemaker, whatever, have some Flawed friends over for cards, I don't care. In fact I think it's great. You come out to the meadow next morning feeling empowered, you give your sheep that little extra bit of attention, all the better for me."

"Where exactly are we going?" asks a petulant Flawed on my right whose nametag says Leonard.

"Great question, Leonard!" Ventor says. "You said to yourself: Look, I want to know where I'm headed. I like that. Good directedness. Also good assertiveness. Perhaps you weren't quite as sensitive to my feelings as you might have been, given that I should have told you where we were headed right off the bat and so therefore feel at the moment a little remiss and inadequate for not having done so, but what the heck, a good growth opportunity for me, and a chance for you, Leonard, to make yourself the center of attention, which seems to be one of your issues, not that I'm in a position to make that judgment, at least not yet. The answer, Leonard, is: southern Utah. Here, take a look."

He passes around snapshots of his ranch and we sit oohing and aahing while holding our lemonades between our knees. It's beautiful. The skies are blue, the cottages immaculate, the mountains white.

On my soft seat I say a little prayer:

Let this be real.

We ride in style through Joplin and Miami and Vinita and Big Cabin. Ventor passes out sunscreen and shoots an antelope from the wagon seat and gives us each a big chunk and a side salad with croutons. He laughs at our jokes and praises any initiative we take and tells us about the summer picnics on his spread, which will feature badminton and ice cream and bluegrass music and pretty Flawed girls from other ranches who really know how to dance. We make Tulsa. We make Sapulpa. We make Chandler, Warwick, Luther, and Arcadia. West of El Reno there's a wide river

and a collapsed bridge. A chalked sign on a plywood scrap says: NEEREST FERRY 200 MILES SOUTH.

"Ouch, this isn't good," Ventor says. "Not that it's bad. Not that I'm trying to predestine our failure via negativity or manifest an Eeyore paradigm."

We start off south along the river. Kids fishing from rotting docks turn to call us Flawed pigs. In a tent town there's a bingo game proceeding under a filthy awning.

Hidden away in a patch of reeds is a rowboat.

"Wow, talk about willing one's own reality into being," Ventor says. "Here I was just wishing we had a boat and one basically materializes! Super. I admit it's not the exact boat I was visualizing, but still it's a boat, and I for one am going to try to focus on its boatness and not on those kind of huge gaping holes in the sides there."

He tells me and Gene Sinclair to go across first and tells Leonard to row. Gene's a former schoolteacher with tremendous armpit goiters who's constantly measuring them with a caliper.

"Good luck, men!" Ventor yells across the water. "Remember, I trust you implicitly!"

When we reach the far shore Gene and I pile out and Leonard starts back across.

"I have to admit this freedom would be kind of exhilarating if my goiters didn't hurt like the dickens," Gene says. "We could just walk away. Wouldn't that be nervy! A guy tries to give you a nice cottage and some dignity and you bite him on the ass."

I think of Connie. I remember the autumn before the purge, when the Flaweds in our grade school were fitted with bracelets during a surprise Assembly. Connie and I stood there blinking madly as the janitor welded ours on. At home Connie decorated her bracelet with glitter glue. Dad called her a trooper and praised her gumption, then broke down in sobs.

I get up and start jogging toward the trees.

Gene begs me to come back and swears that if it weren't for his aching goiters he'd teach me a lesson about ingratitude by kicking my butt. I break across a granite ledge and drop into a canebrake. I hear Gene shouting to Ventor. Then there's a gunshot and some dirt kicks up at my feet and a little pine splinters to my left.

Free again, for what it's worth.

Toward dawn I go to sleep in a ditch near a condemned Arby's. I wake up in the middle of a street market. Five feet away is a bald Normal selling pancakes from a cart.

I'm about to crawl out of the ditch when a couple of militia teens walk by with an entourage of eight Flaweds and a weeping Normal farmer.

"What'd he do, boys?" asks the pancake guy. "If you don't mind me asking."

"Educated his Flaweds," says one of the teens. "Let them read whatever they liked. Now they're so educated they don't listen for shit and we have to keep whacking them."

"Yeah," says the other. "They want to debate every little point."

"No we don't," says a Flawed geezer, who promptly gets a gun butt in the midriff.

"So we burned down his farm," says the first teen.

"Do I ever endorse the wisdom of that decision," says the pancake guy. "You fellows are awfully youthful to be so insightful."

"You should have seen Todd pouring gas on the beets," says the first teen.

"I couldn't believe how hard you kicked that one kitchen chick," says Todd.

"Chick was like shrieking at me," says the first teen.

"Aren't we going to be able to get anything for you?" the slave trader asks. "Are you literally worthless?"

"Then she bites his leg," Todd says. "I was like: Brad's hating this. He thinks this sucks."

"I *was* hating it," says Brad. "I *did* think it sucked."

"And yet you responded with remarkable restraint, by merely kicking her?" the pancake guy says. "I find that really, you know, great."

"We were going to respond by doing her in the barn," Brad says.

"But then the lieutenant comes up and goes no, because she's a virgin," Todd says. "I was like: dang."

"I was like that too," says Brad. "I was like: dang."

"We were both like: dang," says Todd.

"So we went out and wasted the cows," says Brad.

"Your delts looked so killer when you were slitting their udders," says Todd.

"I'll bet your delts looked killer as all get-out," says the pancake guy.

"Then asswipe here started the barn on fire when he was supposed to be flamethrowing

the ducks," says Brad. "Lieutenant was pissed. Asswipe freaked."

"I didn't freak, I was bummed," says Todd. "I was bummed because the lieutenant thought I was a dick."

"You *were* a dick," says Brad. "You were a dick and you freaked."

"For my part," the pancake guy says, "I doubt very much that you were either an asswipe or a dick, nor do you strike me as the type of boy inclined to freak, although far be it from me to contradict your friend, and in fact why don't I just mind my own business before one of you opts to kill me, not that I'd blame you."

Then he goes to toss a pan of grease into the weeds and steps square on my chest and starts screaming bloody murder.

Brad puts his gun in my ear and Todd yanks me to my feet.

"I readily admit I'm not a man of action like you kids!" the pancake guy says. "Lucky you were here to apprehend him! What do you do now, rough him up a bit and add him to your collection?"

"You obviously don't know shit about the regs, sir," says Brad. "This dude is a runaway. This bunch here are repossessed. Two very different things. The dudes and chicks come with us to Omaha for shock treatments. This one's got to be either returned to his master or resold locally by the finder. And that's you."

"God forbid I should appear neurotic or recalcitrant, boys," the pancake guy says, "but I would like to point out that, as lame as this may sound to a couple of daredevils like you, I have a business to run."

"Not if we burn it down," says Brad.

"Ha ha!" says the pancake guy. "I certainly don't mean to be difficult! It's just that I have no idea where one sells a runaway slave."

"Try Tanner's," Todd says.

"Tanner's is a hoot," says Brad.

"Ooh la la," says Todd.

Tanner's is a brothel in a former Safeway. A wiry Normal in a jogging suit is counting crates of condoms in what used to be Produce.

"Don't tell me," he says. "You're in the mood for love."

"Actually I'd like to sell this Flawed," the pancake guy says, blushing.

"New flesh, Artie," the wiry guy says, and a pudge with a stun gun steps out from behind the crates. "What do you think, son? Think he'd make a good addition to Staff?"

"You know exactly what I think, Dad," says Artie. "I think that it's not very nice, forcing someone to become a prostitute."

"Artie, sweet Jesus, why refer to our people as prostitutes?" the father says. "That's not a fun term. That's not a term that makes people want to let their hair down. That's a sad term. That's a term that, if anything, makes people want to put their hair back up, which means I eventually close up shop and you hustle your ass home from college sans degree. Sheesh. My son the philosophical sourpuss. Would it violate your principles too much to keep an eye on this guy for a few minutes, O Pure One? Think you could fucking manage that?"

"Fine, Dad," Artie says. "Whatever."

"We'll be in my office talking price," the father says, and steers the pancake guy into a former walk-in freezer now wood-paneled and decorated with framed posters of sweaty nude Flaweds sucking their fingers.

"Boy, I don't envy you," Artie says. "If you think Dad's mean to me, you should see how mean he is to his whores. I mean his Personal Pleasure Associates. PPA's. You should see how mad he'll get if he comes back here and finds you talking to me. He doesn't go for the idea of his whores chatting with Normals. I mean, if you want to pretend to groan in ecstasy or compliment some john's pecker, that's fine, but just talking for the sake of talking, no, he doesn't go for that. Which is exactly why I'm taking physics at the community college. I'm getting out of the family business. Physics is hard. Really hard. But it's not at all hard compared to helping Dad beat the snot out of some PPA for accidentally calling an AR a john. Dad makes us call them ARs. Affection Recipients. Are you going to be one of the PPAs who dresses up like a girl? Or one who gets gagged and bound? Do you know yet? I guess you wouldn't. I hope you're neither. You seem like a nice guy, so I'll go out on a limb and say I hope you're just a regular old whore."

"Thanks," I say.

"This one time Mack in Security had to stun-gun this AR for getting too rough with this fragile PPA named Kurt," he says. "Mack told the AR, he said, look pal, you want to get rough, go to the Rough Room, there's no need to brutalize a tiny PPA like Kurt. But by that time the AR had a big old hole in his neck courtesy of Mack and had forgotten all about Kurt. You'd be amazed what a big old hole in your neck will do to your sex drive. My point is, did Mack ever catch it from Dad on that one! You should have seen Dad burning a corresponding hole in Mack's neck while I held poor Mack down. Did I like doing that? Of course not. But what was I supposed to do, contradict Dad in front of Mack? Gosh, we probably shouldn't be going on and on like

this. If Dad comes back and hears us you'll get the pipe fitters' convention for sure. So we'd better stop talking."

"Fine," I say.

"Last year at the pipe fitters' convention Dad made this PPA named Earl wear a poodle suit," he says. "That was one room I did not want to go into, except I had to, because Earl had forgotten his fake bone even though it was clearly marked on the Work Order. Last thing I wanted to see was Earl in a poodle suit going woof woof woof under a big pile of naked pipe fitters, but I had my instructions from Dad, the heathen. After I dropped off Earl's bone I went back to my room and studied Bernoulli's equation while sobbing quietly. People look at me and think, he's lucky, his dad's Max Tanner the rich pimp, but I tell you it's no picnic. Sometimes after writing a poem about the beauty of the stars I have to go around and change all the sheets. You think that's uplifting? You think that kind of activity nourishes your sublime nature? Well it doesn't, believe me."

Tanner and the pancake guy come out smiling.

"Artie, super news," Tanner says. "The price is right. All we need now is the physical."

"Great, Dad," Artie says weakly.

They examine my privates and make me hop in place so they can check my heart rate. They count my teeth and test my grip by making me squeeze a can filled with sand and have me read one of their brochures aloud to check for speech impediments.

"These feet worry me, Artie," Tanner says, tapping my claws with a Sharpie. "Those little fuckers could be serious showstoppers. Although I suppose I could put him on drive-through hand jobs. Would you be in favor of drive-through hand jobs, Artie?"

"I'd be in favor of setting him and every other PPA in this dump free, Dad," says Artie.

"All right, smart guy, I'll do that," Tanner says. "Then you can swap your slide rule for a fucking shovel and join your peers in the sewage trench. Hah? Hah? Is that what you want, Einstein?"

"No, Dad," Artie says.

"Then let's have some thoughtful input here," Tanner says.

"He seems well suited to drive-through hand jobs," Artie says through clenched teeth.

"That's more like it," Tanner says. "Now go get him a sexy smock and some baby oil."

Then the lights go out and something blows up and suddenly Flaweds in lingerie are rushing by screaming and swearing, and Normals are hopping over fallen beams with their pants around their knees. I grab Artie's stun gun and make for a gaping hole in the wall. Outside are sycamores and clouds and tongues of flame devouring the words GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS on a fallen paper banner. A guy in a ski mask is sitting on a parking bumper trying to get a jammed gun to fire and a brothel security guard is sneaking up behind him with a billy club. So I stun the guard and drag the guy in the ski mask to a kind of clearing, where a bunch of other guys in ski masks pat me on the back and push me into a van as the Safeway collapses like a house of cards.

I'm bleeding at the knees and choking from smoke and have no idea who these people are or where I'm going, but at least I'm off the hook in terms of hand jobs.

I lie all night in the back of the van with three weeping rescued whores in nun costumes. When we finally stop we're rushed past some swaying denuded mesquites into a cave, where we're given bedrolls and wooden bowls of cold mush.

"Where are we?" one of the nuns asks.

"Texas," somebody answers, and lights a candle.

Outside the cave two Flaweds in ski masks sit on rocks near a campfire.

"Quite a mission," says one.

"Yes, Mitch, quite a mission," says the other, who's half the size of the first.

The lights go out and something blows up and suddenly Flaweds in lingerie are rushing by screaming

"Thanks to my leadership, we really exceeded our project goals," says Mitch.

"I don't know if I'd go that far," says the other. "We only rescued four crummy Flaweds. On top of which you left Frenchy at the scene."

"I beg your pardon?" says Mitch.

"Oh come on," says the other. "First you got lost, then you attacked a brothel rather than a work camp, then you drove off in a panic, leaving Frenchy at the scene."

"I did no such thing," says Mitch. "Why do you insist on making up lies, Jerome? Frenchy and I talked before the mission, and he said that he might want to, you know, undertake some additional activities. It was a secret talk. No one else heard it. We even arranged a se-

cret signal. As we were leaving the site, Frenchy gave me the secret signal, so I kept driving. Simple as that."

"What was the secret signal, Mitch?" Jerome says. "Begging you at the top of his lungs to please please slow down while he sprinted alongside the van weeping? You lie, Mitch. I saw the whole thing. If I hadn't been so busy putting a tourniquet on Lance I would have wrested the wheel away and saved Frenchy myself."

Then they hop to their feet and put on their caps.

"Hello, Judith," says Jerome.

"Good evening, Judith," says Mitch.

"What's all this about?" says Judith, a tall woman with a sawed-off shotgun and a clipboard.

"Mitch left Frenchy at the scene, Judith," says Jerome. "The wrong scene, incidentally."

"I've got something to say," Mitch says. "You people are always yapping about oppression this and oppression that, but you certainly don't seem to mind oppressing me."

"Nobody's oppressing you, Mitch," Jerome says. "Get off it. If anything, I'd say you're attempting to oppress us by accusing us of oppressing you. Wouldn't you say so, Judith?"

I EAT FROM DUMPSTERS, I GNAW FLOWERS, I FIND A DEAD DEER AND STUFF MY POCKETS

"Did you hear that, Judith?" Mitch says. "Did you hear how he turned that around? It's always my fault, and if that's not oppression I don't know what is. Just because I'm one of the few rebels with an internal Flaw, you people think you can treat me like dirt. If you think a perforated duodenum is somehow less significant than an extra arm or some open facial lesions, you're just plain wrong."

"This has nothing to do with your duodenum, Mitch," says Judith. "This is strictly a performance issue."

"You want to talk performance?" shouts Mitch. "Ask this little fart where he learned to fire a machine gun! There he was, spraying friend and foe alike, this smug look on his face, and now he has the gall to criticize my performance?"

"Leave it to you to bring my size into it," says Jerome. "For your information, my size is related to my pituitary, which in turn is related to a suite of mutagenic effects, so what you've just done, whether you're man enough to admit it, is to make fun of my Flaw, which last time I checked was exactly what we were fighting against, Mr. Shits-in-a-Bag."

"That's enough, you two," Judith says. "Mitch, go walk the perimeter."

"Who died and made you queen," mutters Mitch.

"Phil did," Judith says sharply. "And his last words to me as he died gutshot were: 'Continue my work.'"

"Oops," says Mitch. "Guess I sort of hit a nerve there."

"What else is new?" says Jerome. "Open mouth, insert foot."

"What was the first thing I did after Phil put me in charge, Mitch?" Judith demands, holding up her left arm, at the end of which is a reddened stump. "What did I do to make myself a more valuable commander?"

"Cut off your hand with a hacksaw to get your Flawed bracelet off," Mitch says, hangdog.

"That's right," says Judith. "And why did I do that, Jerome?"

"To be able to more convincingly impersonate a Normal," says Jerome, equally hangdog.

"Correct," says Judith. "And what was my first solo mission, post-Phil?"

"You went to Denver and ingratiated yourself with a federal judge and made off with ten grand of his loot," says Mitch.

"And what did I do with the money?" says Judith. "Did I buy myself jewels? Did I flee the country?"

"No," Jerome says. "You bought weapons and food."

"That's right," Judith says. "Weapons and food. Now, if you boys have finished presenting an absolutely shameful first impression of the movement to our guests, I'll tend to my wounded."

Mitch and Jerome flip each other off and stomp away in opposite directions.

"Nice people," says one of the nuns.

"Charming," says another.

▼

Then an old man brings us each a cup of cocoa and a questionnaire, which we fill out by candlelight to the sound of coyotes.

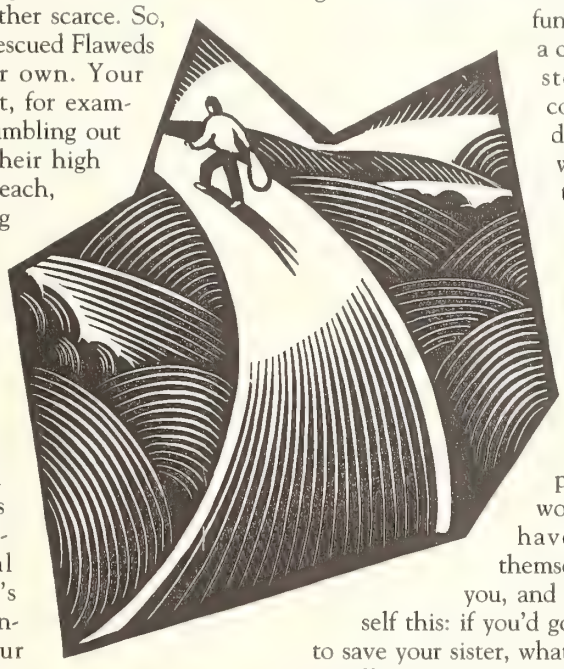
In the morning the old man shakes me awake and leads me to Judith's tent. She's sitting outside, wearing fatigues and hair rollers and sipping coffee.

"Good morning," she says. "Welcome to freedom. I'd like to take a few minutes to tell

you a little about our operation, if I may. Please have a seat."

I sit at her feet and she gives me a cup of coffee and a sugar packet and some creamer.

"Stole these on a recent raid," she says. "A little indulgence. In general, however, our resources are rather scarce. So, after a liberation, any rescued Flaweds are basically on their own. Your cavemates of last night, for example, have been sent stumbling out across the canyon in their high heels with five dollars each, regrettably still wearing their habits, because we have no budget for clothing. It kills me, but it's all we can do to replenish our ammo and buy eggs from sympathetic farmers, much less subsidize jeans for liberated whores. Which brings me to you. The movement is at a critical juncture. The militia's gearing up for a fall offensive, a number of our funding sources have been eliminated, and increasing numbers of escaped Flaweds are crawling back to their masters, scared to death and begging for mercy. What I need is a handful of self-motivated go-getters who aren't afraid to take charge and risk their lives and put the good of the cause ahead of their own safety. Frankly, stun-gunning a Normal is about as impressive a credential as I could ask for. What do you say? Are you interested? Have you ever considered joining the movement?"



In truth I didn't even know there was a movement. I tell her my story. I tell her I'm not joining anything until I find out what happened to Connie.

She removes her stump and hands me a Danish with a perfectly good hand.

"Surprise, surprise," she says. "Step inside a sec."

Inside the tent are pictures of Lincoln and Che Guevara and an extra-large Baggie stuffed with spare false stumps.

"Here's the thing," she says. "I'm Normal. Never even had a bracelet. A few years ago I looked at the movement, or what passed for a movement, and I said to myself, this is no movement, this is a bunch of uninspired yahoos waiting to be led to the slaughter, except that their moribund leadership couldn't locate the slaughter if the slaughter sent up flares. So I invented a myth and invested in some fake stumps. I stopped being Lynette, a shy debutante with no marital prospects, and became Judith, the one-handed scourge of north Texas. Now every month or so I disappear and go to the bank in Lubbock and hit my trust fund and come back with a couple grand and a wild story about robbing a convenience store or seducing a senator. Is that wrong? Is a lie told in the service of good still reprehensible? These are the types of questions I ask myself every night as I apply antifungal to my hand, which is prone to infection due to these cheap stumps. But your people respect me. They work hard for me. Some have died for me. For themselves, actually, and for you, and for Connie. Ask yourself this: if you'd go through all you have to save your sister, what would you do to save a million sisters? Imagine a Connie in every town you've passed through, Connies of all ages, babies in cribs, bitter crones, pigtailed girls, children yet unborn. You could help give them dignity, a chance at careers, children, homes, husbands, peaceful dotages. Isn't that something to work toward? Wouldn't that be a way of honoring Connie's memory?"

Her memory? I think. She's not dead. At least I don't think she's dead. She may be a high-volume whore in some frontier brothel but she's not dead.

"I can see in your eyes that you're still mired down on the petty personal level," she says.

"I guess so," I say.

"Regrettable," she says, then hands me a pocket atlas and a bag of apples and tells me mum's the word on her stump and waves me out of the tent.

I start walking. I sneak through sleeping Amarillo and swing north through ranch country. I hear freights clanking and barbed wire humming in the wind. I see cows asleep on their feet and families of lunatics living in overturned semis. By Clayton the apples are gone and I hurry through Mt. Dora and Grenville and Capulin with a growling stomach. I eat from dumpsters, I gnaw flowers, I find a dead deer and stuff my pockets

with what I can tear off. There are orange lights in ranch windows and bikes propped against willows. There are well-tended gardens and little dresses on clotheslines, and once I hear a man on a ladder say "love me?" and a woman in a tire swing answer "always." I wish I was Normal. I wish I could live here and whistle my kids in from the yard as the rain made sweet homish clangings in my gutters. Instead I shiver behind a former diner and heave rocks at wild dogs and start bits of trash on fire so I can read my atlas. I limp through Raton and Cimarron and Ute Park and my mind starts to slip with hunger and the mountains speak to me in cowboy accents of the ore within them and one morning I straighten up from a gut cramp to find I'm standing in front of a sign, and the sign says: TAOS.

I eat what's left of the deer, for strength, and start down.

I get directions from some Flaweds baling hay in a meadow. I start up a dirt path. There's an orchard where they promised an orchard and a stream where they promised a stream. I crawl under Corbett's barbed wire, then walk through his cows and ducks and goats, practicing a little speech as I go: I know you sold her, I'll say, but I want you to know who it was that you sold. She was funny. She was thoughtful. She loved jigsaw puzzles and could do a one-arm pull-up and once saved a rabbit from a flooded culvert. She could have given you so much if you would've been man enough to accept her, but instead you deceived her and used her and turned her out for a lifetime of misery. And you'll pay. You're paying already. Because she could be here now, conferring grace on this place and on you, who could have been her savior, but instead chose to be her executioner.

The house is huge.

I take a deep breath, then hop a redwood fence and land in a bed of tulips. All around my face are colored bobbing pods. There's a wet bar near a satellite dish and a trampoline near a pool.

Sitting in a rattan chair is Connie, big as a house.

Pregnant.

I look at her. She looks at me. She leaps to her feet and we do a happy little dance around the yard and Corbett steps out from behind a shrub with a croquet mallet and says that what five grand in detective fees couldn't deliver, destiny has.

Then we have lunch.

Over lunch he asks if I want a job in Grounds. I say sure. Next morning he gives me a Walkman and some pruning shears. Soon I'm an old hand. I dust roses and trim shrubs and mow lawns. On my lunch breaks I read. The BountyLand library had a few Hardy Boys and a Bible with fallacious pro-slavery sayings of Christ pasted into the Sermon on the Mount, but Corbett's got everything. I read Epictetus and Frederick Douglass and Bobbo Schmidt, a Flawed Louisiana poet thrown off the Pontchartrain bridge for impregnating his Normal lover. At night Connie and I have long talks, remembering Dad's aftershave and Mom's lasagna, the swell of the hill in our yard, the names of neighbors and the voices of friends.

One night I ask her what she sees in him.

"He's good to me," she says, eyes down. "I'm safe. It's not so bad."

Who am I to judge? So I shut up. She's here in front of me, not off suffering somewhere, not starving, not in agony, and for that I'm glad.

A week later she goes into labor in the rec room, and what seems like years into the night something comes from her, something red and yowling and malleable, temporarily cross-eyed but ours, our girl, and Connie names her Anita, for our mother.

She has Corbett's eyes and Connie's vestigial tail.

That night I dream I'm standing barefoot before a crowd of hostile Normals with baseball bats. I tell them I've never loved anyone so much in my life. I describe the way the baby flinches when she passes gas, her tiny brown eyes, the smell of her head. I beg them to repeal the Slave Edict and grant her full citizenship. I ask them to consider their own children and honor that part of the eternal that resides within them. Then I stand there smiling feebly, hoping for the best, and the crowd surges forward and knocks the hell out of me with their bats until I'm dead.

I wake with a start and think: what am I doing here?

There's a rebel cell recruiting down in Talpa. According to Corbett they're a bunch of skinny passionate guys in a leaning barn, practicing hand to hand with broomsticks and eating vanilla wafers provided in bulk by a sympathetic grocer from Chimayó. After dinner I kiss Connie and the baby good-bye and shake Corbett's hand and off I go.

The night's cold. I see a bushel of snow-frosted apples and two black horses snorting at a frozen shirt on a fence post and I'm lonely already.

There's a half-moon above the rebel barn. I give a little knock.

"I'm here to help," I whisper, and the door swings open. ■

THE FREEDOMS OF THE PAST

On the advantage of looking backward

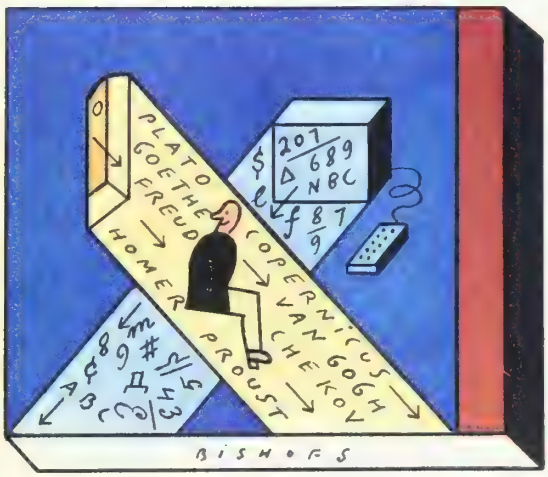
By Frederick Turner

What is today more boring than the up-to-date? Our sculpture, music, painting, poetry, performance art, and fiction all tread the same postmodern circle. The formula goes as follows: first, the subversion of the traditional means of representation, which are held to serve the interests of the power elite; next, what post-structuralist critics call "the play of signifiers," designed to undermine the expectations of the public; finally, the reminder that the sucker who buys the thing is complicit in the fraud described by the fashion magazines as the late capitalist commodification of desire. The joke always turns in upon itself, and those who pay attention to our current artistic and humanistic avant-garde find themselves trapped in the present, in a narrow little moving box of power struggle and injured self-esteem. But we can escape from the box at any time. For if we only heed it, all the past is open to us, with its perilous seas and faerie lands forlorn, and we are free to set sail anytime we want. Our cultural myth is one of liberation, of the present breaking the shackles of the past. But what if it is the past that breaks the shackles of the present?

What must the explorer of the past give in return for his or her liberation? The doorway, like the one that leads into the garden in *Alice in Wonderland,* or like the entrance to a Japanese teahouse, is low and requires certain sacrifices: one must make oneself small and leave one's sword outside. A poet or artist who makes the journey must abandon the claim to originality and the hope of political vindication. Whatever is brought back must be attributed to its proper source, and the artist can demand payment only for the trouble of making the journey, not for the gift itself. One must acknowledge oneself to be a latecomer, a follower, a singer of tales composed by the dead. When one teaches an ancient art,

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THE READER OR APPRECIATOR OF ART MUST SILENCE THE CHATTER OF THE SELF AND PREPARE TO BE ENTERED BY THE GHOSTS OF THE PAST



one sometimes experiences the physical presence of the past. I am a junior instructor in the Shotokan School of Karate, in the Dallas dojo that recently gave the United States Traditional Karate Team one of its champions. The karate students I teach discover ways of knowing their bodies' strength that came to them through me as well as through my teacher, or sensei, Tong; his sensei, Nishiyama; his sensei, Funakoshi; his sensei, Matsumura; his sensei, the Fuchow Chinese master Ason; and his sensei from the old Shaolin temple in Fukien. In their new bodily intelligence, karate beginners experience the selves of the dead. Likewise, when we murmur a line of Shakespeare or contemplate a Cézanne or hum a phrase of Mozart, those powerful and delighted spirits stir within us, not as if we were possessed—though sometimes, wonderfully, it feels so—but as part of our very nature. Even more deeply, our mothers look out of our eyes when we love our children, and we discover how much they loved us in how we love our own.

Without the art of the lyre, Orpheus cannot pass through the portals of the underworld. The reader or appreciator of art, too, must silence the chatter of the self and prepare to be entered by the ghosts of the past. The compensations take several forms. The first is political freedom. The power of others over oneself comes from one's own desire for what the oppressor can give or withhold; the power of another is always conceded to him by the prior belief in the validity of the oppressor's own desires, and one's recognition of his possession of those desires. If one's judges and ideals, being in the past, are no longer subject to contemporary masters, and therefore invulnerable to their control, the oppressor stands revealed as another prisoner of time present, another shopkeeper, another advertisement.

And what is power? Let us define the possession of power as the assurance that the future will be the direct result of one's own present will, without unexpected results. Power depends on one-way linear cause and effect. Few events in the universe can be accurately described in this way. But the overwhelming majority of real events, especially in the human sphere, are nonlinear and cannot be reduced to the oppressor/victim or cause/effect model. The more deterministic and one-way a system is, the more subject it is to thermodynamic decay. It took Stalinist communism only seventy years to dissipate; Hitler's national socialism, less than twenty. This law applies as well to much more benign regimes of power; for instance, IBM, Margaret Thatcher, and the Dallas Cowboys. Nothing is as fragile and evanescent as power. If tradition can be understood as the sum of those human institutions that have lasted a long time, and if longevity is not thermodynamically consistent with oppression, then the older a tradition, the less likely it is to be oppressive, and the more likely it is to have enjoyed the respect of the broad mass of its participants. Tradition is the realm of true freedom. This idea is not new; it is a pity that contemporary social theorists have not yet caught up with the simple insight of Confucius.

Paradoxically, the civilizations that have set themselves to imitate the past always have been the most creative and truly innovative ones. The brilliance of Japanese culture follows from its devotion to classical Chinese culture, to the extent that one of its three scripts (kanji) and two of its three major religious traditions (Buddhism and Confucianism) were imported from China. The European Renaissance was fired by the ambition to recapture the art and thought of ancient Greece and Rome; pictorial perspective was discovered by Brunelleschi in 1420 under the mistaken belief that he merely was recovering a lost Roman technique, and opera was invented in Florence by Peri, Caccini, and Monteverdi in an attempt to re-create the effect of Greek tragedy. Botticelli's famous painting of Venus rising from the sea was a careful reconstruction from written accounts of Apelles' long-destroyed fresco in the Temple of Asclepius at Kos. More recently, one can cite the surge of creativity that was released by the Romantic neomedieval-

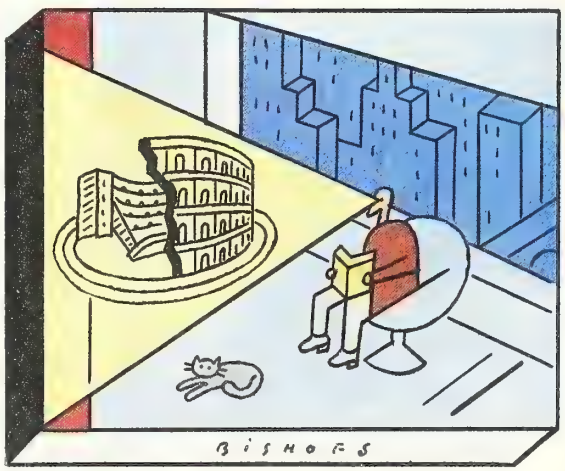
Illustrations by Maris Bishops

ism of the nineteenth century, and the conscious use of classical European models by the writers of the American Renaissance—Melville, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson, and even Dickinson and Whitman.

Science itself is the investigation of the past. The whole exercise of science is to assign causes to events and to seek the component elements of complex wholes. Thus it is concerned to find what existed before the present: the biologist who asks what is the species, genus, family, order, class, and phylum of an animal seeks its origin in an archaic and undifferentiated little group of organisms whose basic body plan has been inherited by wildly different modern descendants. When a chemist analyzes a lump of matter into its molecules, those molecules could be four billion years old; the atoms of which the molecules are made could have been spawned billions of years earlier in the convulsions of an exploding star; the subatomic particles that make up the atoms would be older still, dating back to the first second of the Big Bang. So science is essentially conservative and backward-looking, yet, again paradoxically, the only truly new knowledge we ever get is scientific knowledge, which is the sum of all the facts that have ever surprised human beings by turning out to be different from what was expected: the whole point of experiment and observation is to see something nobody has seen before in the past. Only by devoting itself to the past, to what has already happened and thus cannot be revised according to our wishes, does science come to know new things.

WE HAVE MORE TO LEARN FROM THE WISDOM GATHERED BY HUMAN BEINGS OVER RECORDED TIME THAN WE DO FROM YESTERDAY'S NEWSPAPERS

Art *makes* new things, but the innovativeness of art, like that of science, is based on fidelity to the past. When we tread in the steps of the ancient poets and sages, we may sometimes reach where their steps could no longer go—and there we stand at the edge of the radically other, the truly shocking. "You say I am repeating/Something I have said before. I shall say it again./Shall I say it again?" asks T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*, that most modernist and conservative of poems. "Little Gidding," the final Quartet, recounts a meeting between Eliot and a "familiar compound ghost," at first unrecognized but rapidly taking the form of Dante Alighieri, who advises Eliot on how to meet his death. The point is that Dante had similarly encountered the ghost of a dead poet—Virgil—in *his* journey to the land of the dead. And in Virgil's description of the meeting of Aeneas with his dead father, Anchises, in Book VI of the *Aeneid* we can clearly infer Virgil's encounter with his poetic father, Homer, who had given Virgil the makings of the underworld in the *Odyssey*. The story of Orpheus, whose skill on the lyre enabled him to pass through the gates of the underworld, to enter the land of the dead and return to the land of the living, is only one version of the universal journey of the shaman—that special individual who, in a trance, leaves his or her body, flies through the air, enters the cave in the mountain, descends to its roots, and learns there the wisdom that the tribe will need for the future.



What is the meaning of this story? Not that there is nothing new under the sun, or that we should limit our lives to the precepts of the ancestors, but rather that we have more to learn from the vast store of wisdom gathered by human beings over the long span of recorded time than we do from yesterday's newspapers. Our ancestors were great adventurers and discoverers, and in their company we are more likely to encounter new things than in that of the fashionable and the memoryless. The peculiarly human innovation that nudged us into a different world from our animal relatives was the capacity to pass on thoughts and feelings—even a large moiety of personal identity—from one generation to the next. The innovation was not the ability to pass on information as such: all living species pass on their collective experience in the form of genetic inheritance. What was new was that the subjective world of the *individual* could now be

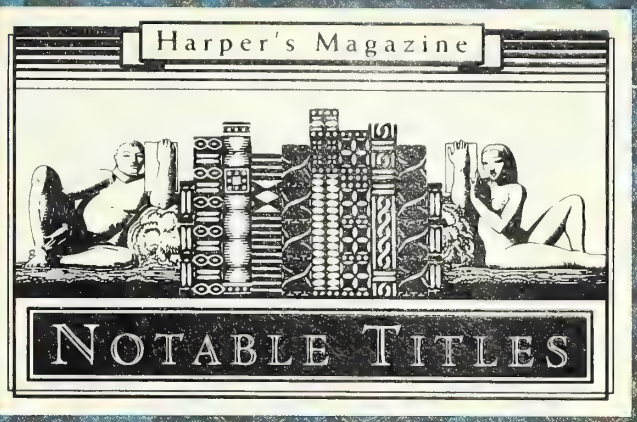
POSTMODERNISM IS A BITTER, NOSTALGIC, AND PROMISCUOUS PARODY OF THE ANCIENT TECHNIQUES OF THE ARTS

transmitted, through works of art and choreography and songs and stories and all the other forms of culture. These were the first artificial intelligence programs, fitted to the wetware of the human brain and nervous system but able to evoke in the minds of the living the knowledge and skills and style of intelligence of the dead

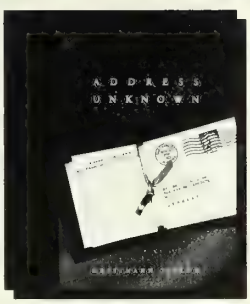
Still, it is possible to forget and to lose contact with the thoughts of the dead. When this happens to a society, the effect is exactly like that of a massive stroke in the human brain: hemiplegia, amnesia, and dyslexia propagate along the path of the lesion, parts of the brain are cut off from one another and begin a ruinous civil war, skills and capacities are lost, and isolated sections of healthy tissue atrophy from disuse. The present attempt in the academic humanities to suppress the cultural past and censor our conversation with the ghosts of the dead is not a stroke of this magnitude; it is more like a minor syncope, a scar around which the rest of the cultural brain can jury-rig a set of alternate connections. Our museums, libraries, galleries, opera houses, symphonies, local cultural organizations, bookstores, corporate cultural-enrichment programs, and art-movie theaters are probably sufficient to keep the cultural memory intact even if the humanities and arts departments of the universities change themselves into ideological re-education camps.

But though the memory of the dead is not lost, we will still require shamans to establish the communication with them that will enable us to hear what our civilization needs in its next hectic century. And shamans require certain specific skills, which are symbolized in the old underworld stories by the golden bough, the caduceus, the lyre, the magic flute, the shamanic drum, the spirit-doctor's rattle, or the mask of the angakok. The talismans refer to the ancient techniques of the arts—melodic structure, poetic meter, dramatic mimesis, pattern design, storytelling. Modernism, broadly speaking, repudiated all these traditions; and postmodernism is a bitter, nostalgic, incompetent, and promiscuous parody of them. Awakened to both the memory and the extent of the loss, young artists and poets see the new world with ancient eyes, revealed in an amazing, brilliant light; contemporary America transformed in the language of the Orphic lyre, the cities and suburbs come alive in all their strange, Hadean, Arcadian grotesqueness and beauty.

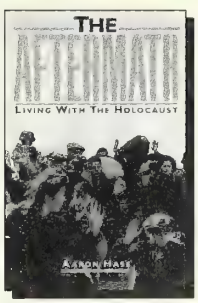
When we imagine the future, it is relatively easy to extrapolate the technological wonders—virtual reality, artificial intelligence, biomedical immortality, space travel, and so on—into a "futuristic" scene. But the very adjective "futuristic" suggests the limits of this approach. The world today is not more futuristic than it was twenty years ago—rather less, I think. The really remarkable transformations have extended our access to the past. During the Middle Ages, one of the two great periods of Greek and Roman classical design lay not in the past but in the future. Think how the European visual imagination was altered by the excavations of Pompeii, whose frescoes suddenly acquainted them with a whole register of ancient life, so different from the former image of antiquity as a world of time-bleached white marble. Consider how the combination of recording and musical scholarship has brought about the paradox that we are probably more in Bach's musical presence now than any eighteenth-century German would have been. The national soul of Mexico is today far more Mayan and Aztec and Nahuatl than it was a hundred years ago. Our twenty-first century is going to be drenched with the fresh images and sounds and poetry of past ages, and our virtual reality will be our whole human past—what, after all, is there left that is more interesting to explore? Thus any present inhabitant of the past is also a forerunner, a prophetic seer and advance guard of the future. A contemporary cliché holds that we should pay attention to the future because that is where we shall spend the rest of our lives. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that we should pay attention to the past, and for the same reason. ■



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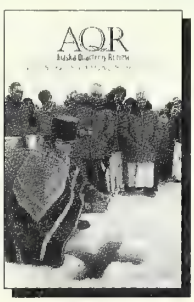


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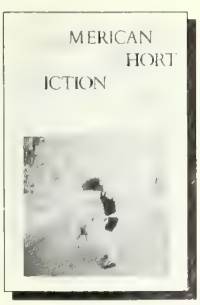


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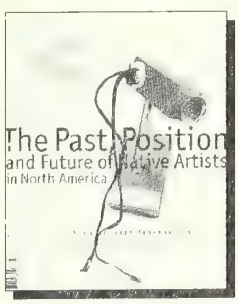
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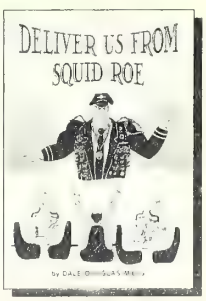
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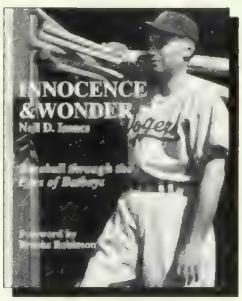
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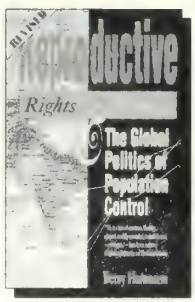
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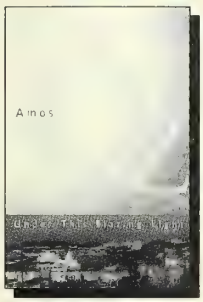


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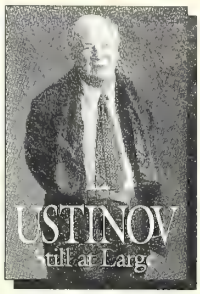


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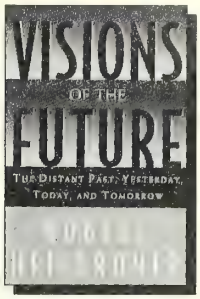
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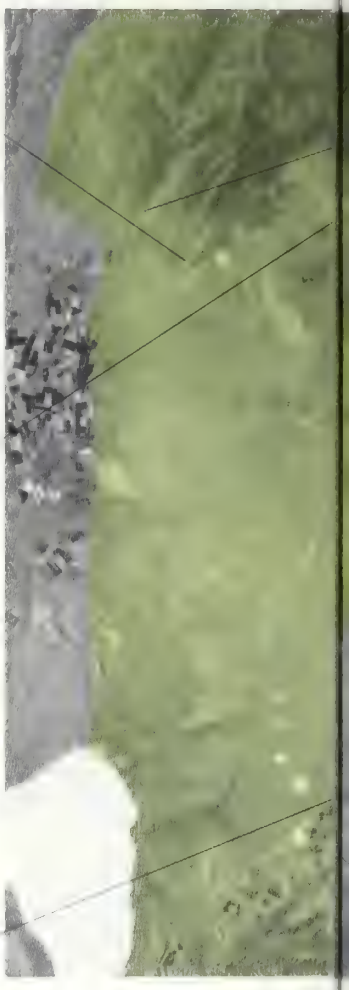
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CEDING TH

Why Israel and Syria Want American

The Golan Heights, shot here from an altitude of 438 miles by the Landsat 4 satellite, is a volcanic plateau studded with conical mounds of lava. It is a place of violent winds and sudden rainstorms that descend from Mount Hermon (top center) to drench the plateau's vineyards and olive groves. On its western edge, the Golan (shown highlighted) plunges 2,000 feet toward the Israeli farms of the Hula Valley (center left) and the Sea of Galilee (bottom left). Throughout history, the army that held the Golan dominated not only Galilee but also the plains leading northeast to the Syrian capital, Damascus. Its distinctive topography has guaranteed the tiny Golan—it covers only 450 square miles—a starring role in the three wars fought between Syria and Israel. Israel seized it in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it. The two countries are now negotiating its return to Syria. But neither side can truly afford to relinquish such valuable real estate to a sworn enemy. And herein may lie the path to peace.

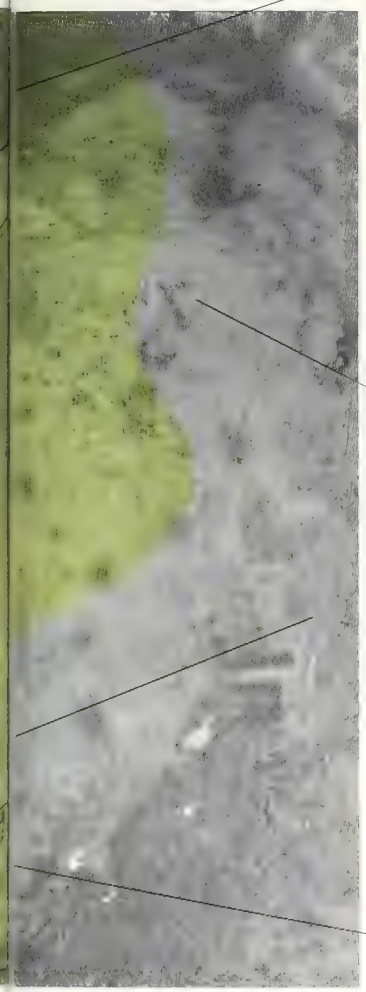


Mount Hermon was captured by Israel at the end of the Six-Day War. Today, Israeli troops here possess some of the world's most sophisticated eavesdropping devices. On a clear day they not only can see the Cham Palace Hotel (Damascus's tallest building) but can also listen in on phone calls as far away as western Iraq. For Syria, Israeli troops on the Golan represent an intolerable violation of sovereignty. For Israelis, who vividly recall Syrian gunners shelling Galilee farmers before the Six-Day War, the return of Syrian troops to the Golan would be unthinkable. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian leader Hafez al-Asad now realize that the way to make peace is to demilitarize the Golan. They want Washington to supply a force of American GIs to guarantee a peace accord. (Clinton has agreed in principle, but Congress has not.) American monitors atop Mount Hermon would share early-warning intelligence with both capitals, an arrangement that Rabin and Asad feel would protect the two sides more effectively than if either army held the high ground.

The Damascus Road, favored by spice traders and Crusaders in earlier times, fell to an Israeli brigade in the Six-Day War. Syria eventually retook the road, but the memory of Israeli troops a half-hour's drive from the presidential palace still haunts Syria's leadership. Today, 200,000 Syrian troops are deployed along a Maginot Line stretching from the Golan border to Damascus. Ironically, in an era when an F-15 can cross the Golan in five seconds, both sides share an almost primal fear of a ground invasion. Either side could inflict grave damage on the other *without* the Golan: Syria with its Scud-C missiles (range 370 miles), Israel with its Jericho-IIs (880 miles). But the importance of the Golan lies in its usefulness as a staging area for invasion. And neither side will trust any nation—except the U.S.—to keep the two armies apart in the event of war.

IGH GROUND

the Golan Heights, *by Robert I. Friedman*



The Banias River, which flows across the Israeli-Golan border, pours 14,000 cubic meters of water every hour into the headwaters of the Jordan River, source of half of Israel's water supply. In the months before the Six-Day War, Syria tried to divert the Banias, and Israeli troops shelled Syria's bulldozers. Syria retaliated by pounding the Galilee. By the end of the war, Israel controlled the Banias and its tributaries, which the government promptly put to use for its burgeoning population. Neither side believes a peace accord could long endure without an agreement to share water resources, along the lines of an accord Israel and Jordan struck last year. Rabin and Asad would look to Washington to monitor and enforce the terms of such a deal.

The destroyed Arab village of Quneitra, once a thriving town of 17,000, is today the base for a 1,000-person United Nations detachment that patrols a demilitarized belt separating the two sides. It is also where a force of American troops would likely be headquartered. Right-wing Israelis, who oppose giving the Golan back to Syria, argue that 5,000 American soldiers—one estimate of U.S. troop strength—could do little to repel a Syrian assault. But the historical record shows otherwise. Ever since U.N. troops were placed in Quneitra in 1974, the border area has been one of the most peaceful in the region. Moreover, Asad may agree to downsize his army near the Israeli border, a concession that would be impossible without an American buffer force. Said one top Israeli official, who requested anonymity: "The political symbolism of U.S. troops says to all and sundry that this is something that the U.S. not only helped negotiate, it's something they want to help keep."

Ramat Magshimim, an Israeli settlement with a population of 496, sits only two miles from the Golan-Syrian border. In all, there are thirty-two settlements on the Golan, but Ramat Magshimim would be the hardest to defend in time of war. Rabin is loath to repeat the experience of the October 1973 War, when the Israeli army had to divert scarce resources to evacuate the Golan's Jewish settlers. He recently called settlements a "worthless" burden on national security and has indicated that he is willing to dismantle those on the Golan in exchange for peace. But the settlers have other ideas. They and their friends among conservative American Jewish groups have published newspaper ads likening the deployment of GIs on the Golan to the ill-fated missions in Lebanon and Somalia. They are lobbying congressional leaders (particularly Senate Foreign Relations Chair Jesse Helms) to scotch a peace accord and to see to it that the Golan remains forever a part of Israel. To rise to the demands of peace, however, Israel may soon find it necessary to come down off the Golan.

Robert I. Friedman's most recent book is Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settler Movement (Random House).

MEXICO AND ITS DISCONTENTS

After the peso's collapse, an unemployed population looks north

By Douglas W. Payne



Last winter, in New York, I watched the televised panic on the floor of the Bolsa, the Mexican stock exchange, and as I listened to a reporter describe the collapse of the peso and the threats to free trade with Latin America, I found myself thinking of the Mexicans I had come to know the previous summer in the *ciudades perdidas*, or "lost cities," the slums that spread, lava-like, across the volcanic floor of the Valley of Mexico. When you are standing in a lost city, the towers of Mexico City's downtown can only occasionally be glimpsed as they rise like the masts of a derelict treasure fleet through the shallow sea of smog that drowns the capital. In today's global economy, it is often said, the mobility of money prevents investors from having to live with the consequences of their actions. In the case of Mexico, however, the mobility of people may ensure that the investors will personally confront the consequences of their mistakes, and as I watched the news from the Bolsa, I wondered how many residents of the lost cities of Mexico soon would be gazing up through another haze at the iridescent spires of Wall Street.

In January, as the peso crisis played out, the White House warned that if the Mexican economy collapsed, as many as five hundred thousand illegal immigrants would cross the border this year. And, in fact, that same month the number of illegal immigrants apprehended along the U.S.-Mexican border doubled. Despite the Clinton Administration's effort to strengthen the border patrol, it remains easy for illegal immigrants to cross. The Mexican government has consistently refused to cooperate in tightening the common border—to no one's surprise. After all, the greatest open secret in U.S.-Mexican relations (apart from the marriage of convenience between drug traffickers and much of the Mexican establishment) is Mexico's tacit support of illegal immigration.

When then Mexican president Carlos Salinas barnstormed the United States during the NAFTA showdown, he argued that the free-trade agreement would create jobs, lift Mexican wages, and thereby keep more Mexicans at home. It was an appealing tune, and NAFTA proponents in the United States performed variations on the refrain. Independent Mexican economists, however, have suggested that the annual informal immigration to the United States of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Mexicans is part of

Douglas W. Payne is a Latin American and Caribbean specialist at Freedom House in New York City.

the strategic economic planning of Mexico's political elites. If true, no government official would confess to the idea because of the political firestorm it would create, especially given the ruckus over California's Proposition 187. It is telling, though, that the Mexican government opposed the California ballot measure designed to deny illegal immigrants most state-government services.

Salinas came close to admitting the obvious when he told *New Perspectives Quarterly*, "I am for the free movement of labor." Needless to say, he was not referring to the migration of American workers giving up five-dollar-an-hour jobs in Detroit to work in *maquiladoras* ("factories") in Sonora or Tamaulipas for five dollars a day. He was thinking of many, if not most, of Mexico's poor, who, from the point of view of the Mexican government, are dead weight—that is, unless they send money home after crossing the only contiguous border between a Third World country and a First World country (when Mexico acquired "First World" credentials in 1994, upon being accepted as the twenty-fifth member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], no one was fooled except gullible foreign investors). Already an estimated 10 percent of Mexico's population, or nine to ten million Mexicans, now live in the United States, and many of them send money south. The Mexican central bank calculates that dollar remittances to Mexico top $2 billion annually; independent studies indicate that the figure is actually higher. The remittances are now the third largest source of hard currency for Mexico, after oil and tourism.

Illegal immigration is important not only as a source of cash flowing into the Mexican economy but also as an outlet for Mexico's overflowing population. The country has seen a 23 percent population growth in the last ten years, to ninety-two million. Even in the past few years, when Salinastroika had appeared to be working, the poor of Mexico saw little chance for upward mobility in a society in which 54 percent of the nation's wealth was controlled by 20 percent of the population, including twenty-four *Forbes*-certified billionaires (reduced to ten after the devaluation, according to *Forbes*). The Mexican government reports that national joblessness is between 3 and 4 percent, but by its criteria someone begging on the street is employed. Some analysts estimate that the unemployment rate is actually up to eight times higher and that as many as 40 percent of workers are toiling in the informal economy. Those lucky enough to be employed in the formal sector have suffered as well: from 1982 to 1994 wages lost about 60 percent of their real buying power. It was largely by suppressing wages that the Salinas government cut inflation from above 150 percent annually in 1987 to about 7 percent in 1994. From 1988 to 1994 the minimum wage was allowed to rise only from about $3.85 a day to $4.60. When, last December, the few pesos in their pockets lost almost half their value overnight, poor Mexicans suddenly had a much greater incentive to go north.

Now that remittances in dollars are much more valuable, and the Mexican poor even more desperate, President Ernesto Zedillo, like his predecessor, will surely be in favor of "the free movement of labor." When all its other methods of social control fail, the Mexican government has a ready safety valve: the lost cities of Mexico are only about five hundred miles from Brownsville, Texas.

"It's as though they *want* us to go," Emilio, a street vendor, told me during my visit to the lost cities last August, at the time of the presidential election. The denizens of the *ciudades perdidas*, though, need little encouragement from the government to leave; it would be a wonder if anyone who had a choice wanted to dwell a day longer amid the squalor of the biggest slum in North America.

The oldest and largest of the lost cities is Nezahualcóyotl. Named after an Aztec poet–warrior prince whose name means "ravenous coyote," "Neza," as it is commonly known, may itself be the third most populous municipality in Mexico, after the capital and Guadalajara. Neza began in the late 1940s as a squatter settlement of a few thousand near the Mexico City airport, at a time when the capital's poor lived mostly in cramped downtown barrios. But as Mexico's industrialization made the city a mecca for millions of unemployed rural workers, what was once a manageable community exploded. The original boundaries of the capital, the Federal District, were obliterated as Greater Mexico City oozed across the floor of the 7,400-foot-high valley in Mexico's central plateau and into the surrounding state of Mexico to become a megalopolis of more than twenty-two million people.

Saturated by the rural exodus, Neza spilled over to the east and south into the burgeoning slums of Chimalhuacán, La Paz, and Chalco. Now Neza hugs the swampy remains of Lake Texcoco, an ecological wasteland at the very bottom of the Valley of Mexico. Before Neza crept to its shores, the lake served as the primary receptacle for Mexico City's sewage and industrial wastes. It still does. The facility built to treat and pump the waste out of the valley is overwhelmed. In the rainy season (May to October) the *aguas negras*, or "black waters," overflow into Neza's grid-patterned streets. They feed pond-size, insect-spawning pools that leach into wells, contaminate Neza's chronically inadequate supply of potable water, and on occasion spew a toxic soup into homes. In the dry season, prevailing northwest winds churn up storms of fecal dust.

At first glance, Neza and the other *ciudades perdidas* remind a visitor of other Third World megacities. There are the same unpaved streets choked with mud, trash, and human waste; the swarms of battered Bluebird buses and rusted minivans packed with people, animals, and goods; the seemingly endless ex-panses of cement and scrap-metal shanties; the children whose knees buckle from hunger as they walk; the dazed looks of the chronically ill; the joblessness; the alcohol; the drugs; and the packs of stray dogs. But Mexico's lost cities are different from the *favelas* of Rio de

Janeiro—where drug traffickers, police, and the Brazilian army battle for turf in what Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has described as "undeclared civil war"—and distinct, as well, from the seething hillside barrios of Caracas—where feral youth gangs own the night and the police show up only during daylight to number the corpses. Mexico's lost cities display a unique form of order, imposed by the Mexican oligarchy through time-tested mechanisms of social and political control.

I saw a manifestation of that control in the metal garbage carts pulled by horses and donkeys that streamed in and out of an enormous lakeside dump in Neza. The carts were painted with a logo in green, white, and red. These are Mexico's national colors. They are also colors usurped by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the world's longest ruling political party, incorporated as Mexico's state party in 1929.

On top of the mounds of refuse, beyond the horse-drawn carts, a small army of *pepenadores*, or scavengers—men, women, children—were systematically digging for glass, metal, wood, newsprint, or anything else that could be sold to the lords of the dump, the PRI *cacique* and his heavies (*cacique*, meaning "boss," is the old Nahua Indian word for village chief). In all the giant dumps that have risen like volcanos amid the lost cities, the *pepenadores* have been tightly organized by the PRI. At election time, they vote en masse for the party; for PRI political rallies or May Day parades, they are often hauled in like produce on trucks. In exchange, they are allowed to live on the dump in hovels constructed from materials they have scavenged and to make their living by sifting through the garbage. Rafael Gutiérrez Moreno, the late "Garbage King" who once presided over an array of lost-city dumps, amassed such wealth and power selling recyclable materials and delivering the votes of the *pepenadores* that in 1979 he won election as an alternate to Mexico's federal legislature.

The regimentation of the *pepenadores* is but one of the blatant manifestations of the PRI's continuing control over the lives of Mexico City's poor. Consider the experiences of Feliciana, who lives on a pothole-pitted side street near Colonia Maravillas, one of Neza's older sections. With deep lines in her face and graying hair pulled back into a braid, she appears to be in her sixties. She and her late husband and their three small children came from the state of Puebla in the late 1950s and built a house on a tiny plot purchased from a real estate company that advertised a bountiful new life in Maravillas ("Marvels"). They soon discovered, however, that the land was not the company's to sell when a *cacique* showed up with the police and threatened to have them and their neighbors evicted if they did not ante up protection money. "We had to pay," Feliciana told me. "If we didn't pay him, he'd stop the water trucks from coming. There was nothing here then: no streets, no electricity, nothing. It was a desert. We couldn't live without water."

In a landscape as nightmarish as one of Salvador Dali's icon-littered deserts, families like Feliciana's have constructed their own homes from cinder block, corrugated metal, and scrap wood. Over the years many have added on extra rooms and second stories in order to house expanding or extended families, or to rent to newcomers as the land ran out (the residents of Neza are now packed some 150,000 to a square mile). Feliciana described the decades-long struggle that the community waged to get the government to provide land titles and install basic services. "Once there were enough of us, they wanted our votes," she said. "Then we got some things. But only if we supported the PRI."

The oligarchy is insatiable. Feliciana pays taxes on her property and taxes for utilities, one fee to the city to operate her store and another, evidently a monthly shakedown, to the neighborhood *cacique*. What is left of her profits from the soft drinks, candies, and cosmetics she sells in her store—a small shed next to the two-room house she shares with a daughter and four grandchildren—plus the meager earnings from the sewing her daughter takes in, barely keeps the household in beans and tortillas.

"We are always paying," she said. "The PRI, it is a mafia."

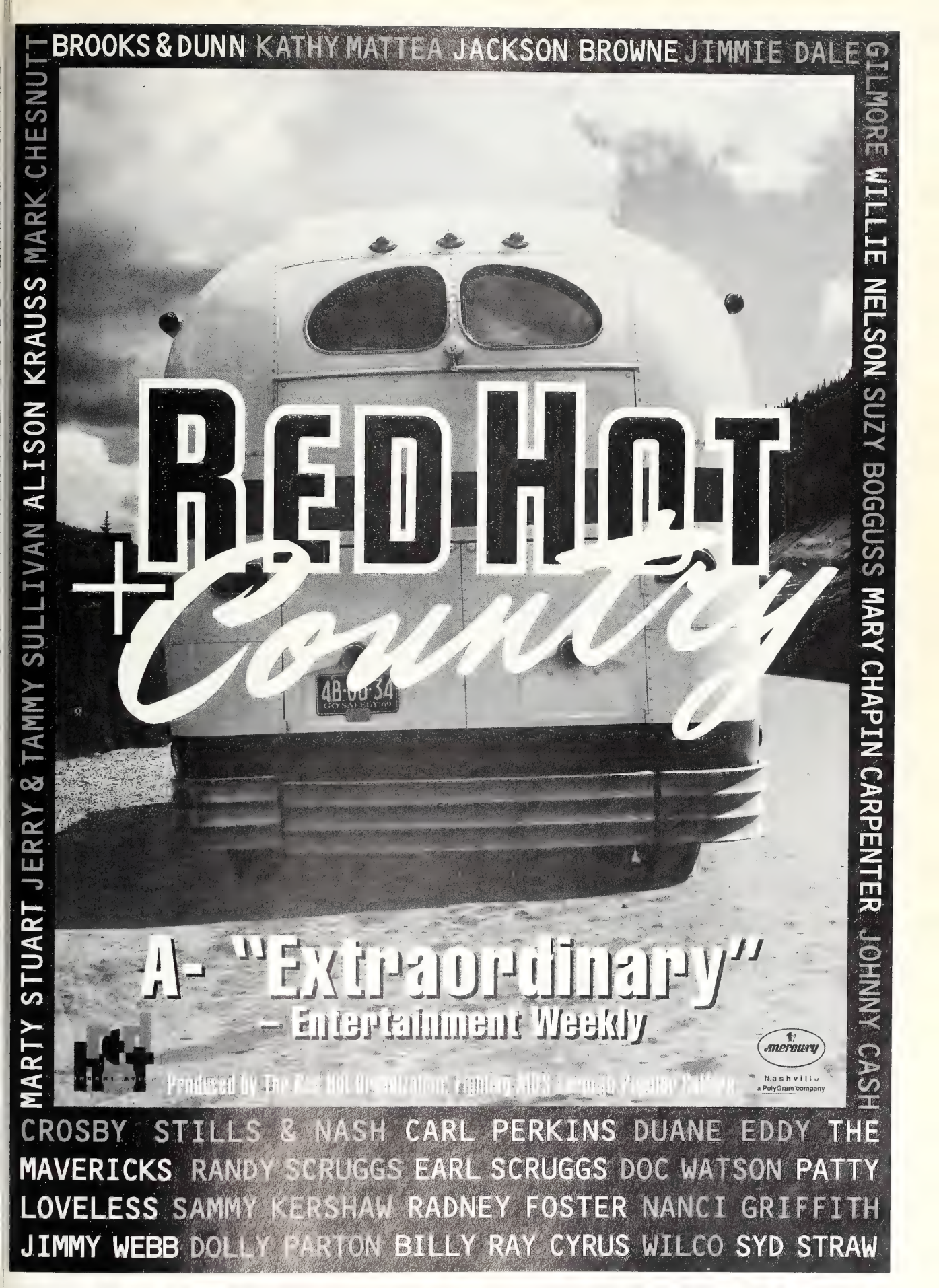
As the lost cities grow, so does the control of the PRI. In the newer slum of Chalco the poorest of the lost-city poor are rapidly populating another ancient lake bed, presided over by Popocatépetl and Ixtaccíhuatl, two volcanoes that, in Mexican folklore, were once human lovers. In 1519 the Spaniard Hernán Cortés marched his army through the high pass between the peaks on his way to conquer the Aztecs.

Today, Chalco is being conquered by the PRI. I visited there for a few days, and on the ride out along the Mexico-Puebla highway, a young woman with Mayan features fell asleep against my shoulder on the crowded bus. She was awakened by the miasma emitted from a garbage dump cut into a hillside along the road. The *pepenadores* there had used rocks, painted white, to spell out "COLOSIO" in huge letters along the slope, in homage to Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI presidential candidate assassinated five months before.

The woman's name was Imelda. She told me she had a cleaning job in the capital that paid a minimum wage, then $4.60 per day, a quarter of which was eaten up by the cost of her daily, five-hour round-trip commute. Her husband, a day laborer, had to pay dues to a PRI-controlled construction union to be able to work; even so, his employment was sporadic. Imelda's greatest concern, however, was holding on to their still unfinished house in one of Chalco's newest settlements, miles from a paved road.

As Imelda and I trudged through the mud toward her home, a tiny box of cement and brick, she told me that a few days earlier the police had come to the settlement and threatened to throw everyone out because the people from whom they purchased their parcels of land had defrauded them. Then representatives from the PRI arrived and told them that their sales receipts were worthless but that they would re-

MARTY STUART JERRY & TAMMY SULLIVAN ALISON KRAUSS


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ceive help in obtaining title to the land if they promised to vote for the PRI the following Sunday. "My husband and I told them we understood," she said. "What choice did we have? We have no place else to go. We have children. But I heard that others around here protested. I'm afraid of what might happen."

Buttoned-down PRI spokesmen in the capital like to say the *caciques* are a thing of the past. But Imelda's story was nearly identical to Feliciana's, only it was happening now in Chalco. And in Chimalhuacán, another new slum, a group of women gathered around me down the street from a polling station. "They tell us if we don't vote for the PRI, we won't be allowed to register our children in school," one of them said, her fists clenched at her side. "That is against the law." The Mexican constitution, in fact, guarantees not only free primary education but also adequate housing for all Mexicans. When I said the vote was supposed to be secret, they all shook their heads. "Look, mister," one of them said, "if the PRI is not satisfied with the number of votes they get here, then everybody here will pay the price. They control everything."

Having listened to many similar tales of political extortion in the weeks preceding the August election, before leaving Mexico I tipped off Mark Fineman, Mexico City bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*. A few weeks after the election, Fineman went to Chalco and found 420 families huddled in an unfinished primary-school building. They had been threatened just as the people in Imelda's settlement had been. Evidently they had refused to kowtow to the bosses. Hundreds of municipal riot police had rousted them, demolished their shanties, and robbed many of them of their belongings. Ignacio Martínez Romero, the school's director, had offered temporary refuge. He told Fineman, as quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* (September 17, 1994), "Everything here is (about) land . . . and fraud is the system. At this level, fraud and politics seem to go together."

The sentiment was echoed by Marcelino, a gardener and fix-it man in a hillside community near Neza called Loma Encantada ("Enchanted Hill"). "The government manipulates the poverty of the people," he said. "The government is the father and we are supposed to be the children. If we do not behave we are punished." Marcelino was giving me his view of Solidarity, the multibillion-dollar program initiated by Salinas to combat poverty in a country that has neither unemployment benefits nor a welfare system. Solidarity is described by the government as a politically neutral, self-help program in which citizens form local committees to determine what are the most pressing needs—a school, a well, electricity. "Here, the *caciques* control these committees and they control the money," Marcelino told me. "Most of us here on this hill oppose the government. And you see what we have—nothing." On the other side of Loma Encantada there recently had been a Solidarity ceremony for the opening of a new soccer field. "Those people there are hungry. Do you really believe that was their decision, to build a soccer field? What's more, that field was built by a company owned by a PRIista. So you see where the money went in the end."

The Solidarity officials I encountered in the lost cities all denied that there was any political pressure involved with the Solidarity program. I spoke to one official (who if named would be punished by the PRI) as he inspected a foul-smelling drainage ditch in the Covadonga settlement in Chalco, which is known as the cradle of Solidarity because it is where Carlos Salinas himself came to inaugurate the program (the electrical system that Salinas promised Chalco was eventually installed, but it then cost about $270 to hook up to it, more than three times what a minimum-wage earner makes in a month). "Look," the official said, "the real problem is that many people here don't understand how we are trying to help them. They must participate more." After taking a call on a walkie-talkie he excused himself. Across the road he stepped into a new four-wheel-drive Solidarity vehicle. As he drove away I noticed PRI campaign posters with the face of presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo pasted to the sides.

Any contemplation of Mexico's future must account for the fact that half the population is under the age of twenty. In Neza the figure is closer to 60 percent. With the cost of secondary school beyond the reach of most families, the alternatives are limited minimum-wage jobs, unemployment, gangs, hanging out.

Unlike many of his peers, Hector, at the age of eighteen, had found a way to make money in the underground *rocanrol* business. I came upon his stall in a street market near Colonia Evolución. A group of longhaired *chavos* ("young toughs") in denim and leather jackets were browsing through hundreds of bootleg cassettes. All were hard rock—traditional, heavy-metal, thrash, punk. They were by U.S. and European bands, and by homegrown Mexican bands too. Silk-screened T-shirts for sale quilted the cavelike stall. "Hand of Doom" by Black Sabbath blared from Hector's Panasonic boom box.

Hector told me his big sellers included "anything metal," the Doors, the Sex Pistols, and the Ramones, whose likeness appeared on his shirt. Grunge, he said, holding up a Nirvana tape, was beginning to catch on. He explained that he bought cassettes from dealers in the capital, then made duplicates on his boom box to sell at a price the locals could afford. He also received cassettes in the mail from a cousin in Chicago, but had to give "tips" to postal workers to keep them from stealing his packages.

A lot of Mexico's underground rock, which thrives in working-class barrios, is an expression of rage—against the government, industrial pollution, the rich, the police. You will not hear it on Mexican radio. Some bands revel in impending doom—civil war, environmental disaster, nuclear holocaust. Others espouse a neo-anarchism that calls for total war against authority—governmental, parental, or religious. Hector said that years ago the government

used to crack down on the scene. "But then it wised up," he added. "The kids just want to get wasted, they don't want to be Zapatistas."

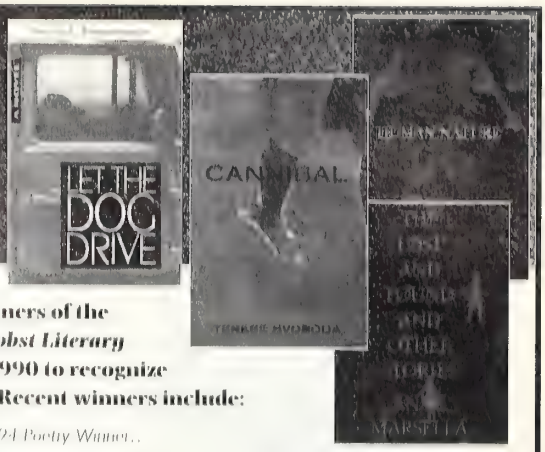
I knew that Neza had spawned a particularly virulent strain of rock, and I asked Hector about Los Mierdas Punk ("The Punk Shits"), one of Neza's first *punkero* groups. He said he heard they had broken up, but he had a number of cassettes by Neza's newer breeds, some of which he had taped himself at live concerts. Los Desviados ("The Deviates"), snarling speed metal. Colectiva Caótica, straight punk. And Desobediencia Civil, growling thrash. Here are some of the latter's lyrics, as best as I can make them out:

. . . You can't live
You can't think
As long as the government exists
They make you sick
They make you empty
They kill you if you won't die . . .

That night I went with Hector to Salón Cinco ("Room Five"), a walled-in, roofless parking lot off Avenida Lopez Mateos, a wide street that runs north-south through Neza. Hector explained that *rockero* entrepreneurs far bigger than he rented parking lots or closed off an alley for a night and paid off the *caciques* and the police to put on events. "These things are never announced," Hector said. "Word gets passed on the streets."

The throb of rock music could be heard blocks away. We paid ten pesos apiece, were frisked by a gauntlet of bouncers, then elbowed our way in. At the end of the long rectangular lot two shirtless D.J.s with ponytails swayed over a console on an elevated platform. Big black speakers stacked along the cinder-block walls brought forth a song called "*Tus días están contados*" ("Your Days Are Numbered") by Transmetal, a band from Ecatepec, an industrial area across Lake Texcoco. Sheets of orange tarp balloomed above a floor teeming with two thousand kids in *rockero* regalia—black leather jackets and vests, jeans, miniskirts, safety pins. A number of teens had woven into sweatshirts and caps U.S. team logos: the Dallas Cowboys and

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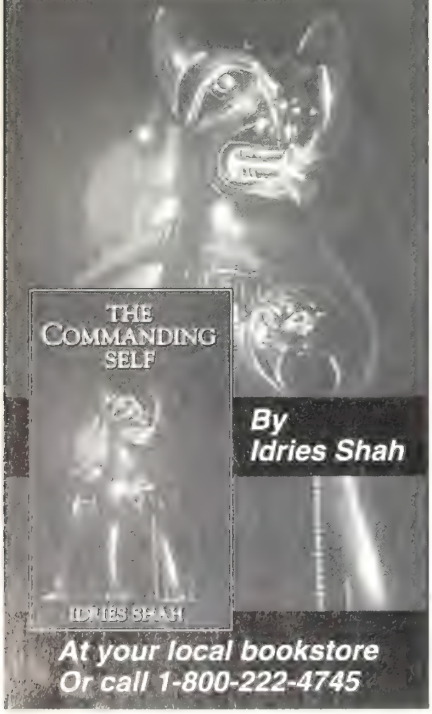
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the Los Angeles Raiders. Some kids danced, some posed, others shared joints or clear plastic bags of beer. The most popular intoxicant, at least among the *chavos*, seemed to be industrial solvents, which they poured from metal cans onto balled cotton or cloth held in their hands, then inhaled through their fists. Under a set of wooden stairs, dozens of them had fallen into a stupor.

I followed Hector up the stairs to a narrow catwalk from which I could look out over the wall. The street lights of Neza rippled into the distance across the floor of the Valley of Mexico. Below, an old woman in a white dress with a shawl covering her head entered one of the fifteen or so cubicles that ringed a cramped courtyard.

Hector tugged my arm, drawing my attention back inside. Some speed-metal song by a Mexican band I could not identify was playing. In front of the thundering speakers, hundreds of kids were jumping and whirling in a tight oval formation while others tried to hurl themselves on top.

Two days later I stood outside the Neza Stadium, an oval hulk of concrete moated by stagnant water that filled the depressions in its buckled parking lot. I had come for a look because I had heard that the stadium was slowly listing into the soft lake bed and that the Neza Toros soccer club had to play all their matches away from home. From behind I heard, "Hey, friend," in English and turned to see a young man jump off a bus and head toward me. His curly black hair hung to his shoulders. He wore madras Bermuda shorts, dirt-caked cowboy boots, and a tight-fitting sleeveless T-shirt with METALLICA emblazoned across the front.

"You are from over there, right?" he asked me, "over there" being his English translation of *el otro lado*, "the other side." His name, he said, was Gustavo, and it turned out that he had crossed illegally into the United States in 1988 and had been a member of a gang in East Los Angeles. He had spent a few years in a California youth facility for attempted murder—"Gang-banging, you know." Then he had been deported. Now nineteen and back in Neza, he worked for the minimum wage making change on the bus he had just gotten off. I asked him about the stadium. "Sure, it's sinking," he said, switching into Spanish. "Man, everything here is sinking. What's *chingón* ("fucking great") is that the new jail is sinking, too."

It was late on a Sunday afternoon and Gustavo and a friend, Andres, heavyset, a few years older, were done for the day. Gustavo wanted me to see the jail. Andres was more interested in asking about New York. How cold is it? There are Mexicans there, right? What kinds of work can you find? Are there a lot of blonde women?

As we drove down Avenida Rancho Grande, Andres swerved back and forth to avoid the horse-drawn garbage carts wobbling toward the lakeside dumps, the dogs that snapped after them, and the craters in the road. Gustavo wanted to know if I was afraid of getting robbed. There are hundreds of youth gangs in Neza, and many older residents had told me they do not go out at night.

"They're not so tough, really, not like in L.A., where everybody has guns." He said he was more wary of the police. "The cops are the real criminals here. They work for the politicos. You know, harassing people. They put you in jail for nothing, then they steal your money, your clothes, everything."

The new jail, an enormous flat concrete structure, had been built out on Lake Texcoco amid the dumps. Razor wire scrolled along the top of its gray walls. But the twelve pillbox towers guarded no one; the structure was empty. I later found out that the prison, like the stadium, was indeed sinking into the marsh, but that engineers hoped to solve the problem in time for it to open later this year. "Look at that thing, man," Gustavo said. "You can put a lot of *chavos* in there."

A passenger jet ascended from the airport and climbed out over the lake. Andres asked me how long it took to fly to New York. ■

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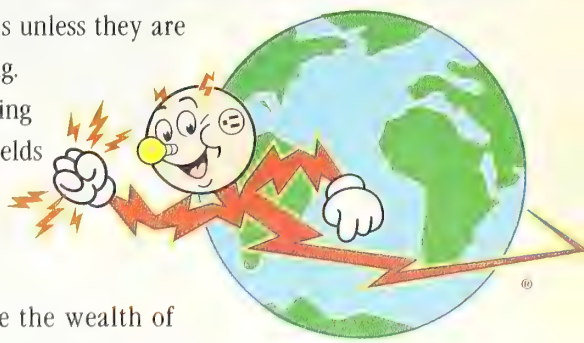
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The justification for this kind of thinking is the Rio Treaty with its focus on limiting carbon dioxide emissions—and as signed in 1992 by former President George Bush with the advice and consent of the US Senate. Should the Rio Treaty be turned into the world's energy law? The answer is "no."

Rio is premised on a one hundred year old theory that catastrophic global warming will result from burning fossil fuels because they emit CO_2, a greenhouse gas. This controversial theory has no support in observations. In the intervening century, climate observations suggest the theory should be discarded, not used as a pretext to curtail industrial activity.

Predictions of future climate conditions generated by general circulation computer models are what the environmental community relies on in defense of *Rio*. But these models are intentionally manipulated so that they predict apocalypse. Existing models cannot replicate actual climate conditions unless they are manipulated. As a result, they fail the first test of computer modelling.

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WINTER BLUES

On the road with a Harlem duo

By Adam Gussow

FEBRUARY 1—NEAR ALLENTOWN, PA.

"Stay out of this, Mister Adam!" Miss Macie hisses, her lavender Yoko Ono glasses glinting as I look up in the rearview mirror. "Mister Satan oughta go get himself a white whore!"

"I'm out of it," I murmur, struggling to keep the car centered as we fly home toward New York along I-78 past Maxatawney and Kurtztown. Tonight's Happy Hour gig in Harrisburg is already a memory, eighty miles behind. Snowbanks gleam in the cockeyed glare of my misaligned left low beam. The right went out last week and really should be replaced.

"That's my *evil* little crabby!" Mister Satan roars proudly in the seat next to me, stroking his gray beard. His current hairdo—two dozen spiky dreads—makes him look at once gentle and antic, like the Brother from Another Planet. But Miss Macie, our conscience, our prod, sometimes imagines things—racial slights, insatiable jungle lusts—and won't be humored. "White-girl tramp, no-count heifer!" She blows a hotter solo than we do. He and I exchange glances as she scorches the back of his neck. *I'm* certainly not his whore, although it's my car we tour in and I've often come offstage ravished by his guitar playing and cymbal crashing. He's the one-man band; I'm the harmonica player and road manager. (Neither of us flirts much with the women who come to see us play—white or black—although I did have one sweet, brief dalliance with a London girl of Jamaican extraction whose Bloomsbury accent thrilled me.) Miss Macie travels everywhere we go; Mister Satan and I split the driving. Recording artists on the Flying Fish label, a national act on what passes for today's blues circuit. Satan and Adam: the color line writ large and trampled. We do put on a show.



My Honda hits a pothole and shudders in the dim road light. The reverb chamber stowed behind my seat rattles like a sleigh bell; Mister Satan's high-hat cymbals and wooden stomp board clatter in the rooftop carrier overhead. The car speaks; we used to take turns mimicking the squealing fan belt until I had it tightened up. Mister Satan was an auto mechanic in the Seventies—gave up guitar, nursed his dying previous wife—and knows what the various complaining sounds mean: dry wheel bearings, busted timing chain. He's from Mississippi, originally. Went back down in 1980 after that wife died and changed his baptismal name to the current one, came back into music with a fresh new sound, funk guitar gone nuclear—fish-flutter strums, three-octave fingerings that seem to crab-walk through thickets of droning open strings, releasing showers of blue sparks. He has the same profoundly demoralizing effect on other guitar players that Delta blues legend Robert Johnson was said to have had back in the Thirties. Except Johnson sold his soul to the devil at a Mississippi crossroads one midnight to get that good, and Mister Satan vehemently

Adam Gussow is a musician and graduate student in English at Princeton University.

Illustration by Mark Ulriksen

denies owing any*body* any*thing*. Our most recent album, called *Mother Mojo*, features a cover shot of his artwork, an African mask design of slivered black-and-gold parabolas. In Harrisburg, I sold five CDs and three cassettes off the stage. We autographed most of them with the same incredulity we felt two years ago, when the first person asked. Nobody ever asked during our four years on the sidewalk in Harlem, when we had nothing to sell except musical ferocity and an odd-couple look. People out there got used to the white boy playing with Satan, and we made lots of dollar bills thrown into a plastic bucket. That was Harlem; we're out in the world now, making our way in America. The problem tonight was a blonde cocktail waitress who smiled in the wrong direction. Mister Satan plays with his eyes closed—when they're not unfocused in orgasmic rapture—and didn't even notice her. Miss Macie did.

Mister Satan permits nobody to curse in his presence—"mother-effer" and "bass-ackwards" are as raw as he gets—which is why Miss Macie now proceeds to cut loose. She knows all the Anglo-Saxon words plus a few salty backwoods expressions her uncles must have used down in Halifax County, Virginia. These work their magic. Mister Satan turns in a fury and glares, then cranks my car stereo *all the way up*—Thelonious Monk's bittersweet clanked piano on "Rhythm-a-ning" humps and rages out of all four speakers, including the one behind Miss Macie's head. Transistors are saturating, distorting; paper cones are shredding; another pothole shudders the car; and suddenly we're all cursing, laughing, letting the madness out, polyphonic as a Dixieland ensemble.

"Goddammit!" I yell.

"Nowwww, Satan," Miss Macie huffs.

"Y'all done gone off!" he roars. "Givin' me that Bellvue nonsense."

I've never heard Monk so clearly as in this particular moment.

FEBRUARY 5—HARLEM.

"You'll live through it!" Mister Satan hollers cheerfully as I hobble down the front steps of his apartment building. This is what he always says. Fever blisters, bad shows, girlfriend troubles.

"You finally got yourself a crippled harmonica man," I say.

He throws one of his amps in the back of my car, a deft heave by a wiry man. "Cripple and the Crab!"

Miss Macie leans out the second-floor window with cigarette in hand, puffing irritably, a stocking cap on her head. "Satan, get your nerves together."

"Yes, baby."

Tonight's gig at Rafters in West Chester, Pennsylvania, is our final tune-up before next week's southern tour. We've traveled this smelly stretch of the Jersey Turnpike past Port Newark and the chemical refineries a hundred times. Mister Satan takes over just past Metuchen; I slipped on snow-dusted ice yesterday—direct hit to the left kneecap—and can barely depress the clutch pedal. "Smoke youself a cigarette, young man," he growls in his familiar way, pushing his pack of Kools at me. I'd never touched one until we started touring like this, working indoors late at night. Like the shots of Johnny Walker Black I strategically deploy, the cigarettes induce a flow state at the expense of consciousness. Mister Satan drives the way he plays, with a fierce stream of life force. I begin outlining the tour: the television appearance in Charleston, dollars we'll pick up, number of sets per night. He's with me, then suddenly not, waving his hand, irritated. "You and my daddy, taking me out to the woods and pointing out *each tree* we gotta chop down. All those trees I gotta get through in order to get to my last one and be through with the mess. That's a holdback, man."

In West Chester (a forgettable town of low-slung brick houses) our soundman, Alex, is happy to see us on this unexpectedly mild Saturday afternoon. Satan and Adam did two hundred paid at the door back in November, and we've been invited to return. We load out the car in familiar sequence, heaving ourselves through several shouldered doors and dumping equipment onstage, dancing lightly out of each other's way on the return trip. My two harmonica amps plus the reverb chamber total nearly one hundred pounds. A 1954 Fender Bassman, lovingly restored with burnished gold tweed, ozone-fragrant alchemy of glowing vacuum tubes, humming transformers, saturated speaker coils, aged paper cones; a 1948 National—art deco cutouts in the varnished cherry-wood paneling, chrome handle like an old Buick bumper—that seems to glow with the numinous vibrations of history. Plug me in and I couldn't be happier. A flick of my tongue and the stage vibrates through the soles of my feet.

Mister Satan yells at me during sound check for being too loud.

"I can't hear myself in the monitors!" I yell back.

"*Damn* the monitors, man! If you can't hear yourself loud as you are you got something goin' on wrong!"

A couple of barflies watching NCAA basketball on TV gaze at us with mild interest, a younger white man and an older black man spatting in public. I finally limp offstage. I *am* louder than him because he, for some inexplicable reason, has kept his two-amp guitar volume absurdly low. I know my job. My job is to match myself to his genius—smoothing his roughness, yelping responses to his calls, surfing home on the tidal waves he spews in all directions. If I turn down now he'll suddenly crank it at showtime and swamp me. Why does he fuck with me like this?

I retreat to Alex's sound booth; Mister Satan grabs his coat and heads out while Miss Macie waits for the take-out sandwiches they've ordered. Alex, equalizing his five-thousand-watt system, cheerfully explains in a loud voice the difference between white noise and pink noise. Both sound to my uneducated ears like jet engines at full throttle. Miss Macie is suddenly throwing a fit with the young blonde waitress, who seems mystified and calls me over. The problem concerns two orders of french fries, which can be had with or without cheese sauce.

"Now, Gussow," Miss Macie sneers when I try to intervene, "what would I want with some shit like that on my french fries?"

"I'm not saying you *have* to have

the cheese," I groan. "I'm saying you have the *option* of—"

"Y'all treating Satan and me like niggers!" she spits out. "But I ain't no fool! I know y'all sleeping together behind my back!"

The waitress and bartender are bee-stung, shocked. I make the best fragile peace I can and flee across two parking lots to the motel next door.

"Can we talk a minute?" I ask when Satan opens the door of his room.

"Come on in," he grunts. We sit at the foot of his bed. He has on his green fatigue jacket and is smoking and watching cartoons on TV. The Roadrunner tricks Wiley E. Coyote one more time—the old lure-him-off-the-cliff ruse.

"I'm sorry about before. I ah . . ."

"You were too damn loud, man."

"You know I'm not trying to drown you out."

"Shut up and smoke you a cigarette," he growls, tossing me his Kools.

"Miss Macie went off on some poor waitress over at the restaurant," I sigh ruefully.

"My little baby is a *hell*-raiser!" he roars, grinning, shaking his gray beard as we slap hands.

It's the middle of the first set. We've pulled a full house—white kids sitting cross-legged at our feet, faces stretched clear to the back wall—and I'm in trouble. Mister Satan recently changed his guitar strings; the new lighter rock set can't withstand his nonstop rhythmic attack. Tonight Mississippi tuning has come to southeast Pennsylvania. Those aren't blue notes he's playing; those are purple-green insinuations, indigo overtones, muddy catfish chords from the bottomlands. They make every note I play sound like shit, but who am I to say he's flat? I'm the soul of uptight Western Europe, with my schoolmarm's pitch pipe and well-tempered harmony; he's the trumpet's growl, the buzzing elephant-ear resonator on the African drum, anything to make your notes cackle. Tonight he's cackling at me. Or just grievously out of tune.

So much for consciousness. I throw back a scotch between sets and opt for flow. Hovering next to me at the bar is a trio of women who've begun to show up regularly at gigs: two cute black cousins from Philly and their gregarious Jewish friend with the large delicious mouth. They're sending me signals: hands on cocked hips, hair brushed back and carelessly fluffed. They're after my aura, not *me*. Meantime, people are itching to dance—Pearl Jammers in flannel shirts and goatees, gray-bearded folkies, girls I could've hit on and didn't. The second set grooves immediately with bodies swirling in front of us. Mister Satan is seated on his plastic stool like a pilot at the controls—stomping downbeats on his matched cymbals, clacking foot pedals against his wooden board in polyrhythmic commentary. Once again I'm hanging onto the lion's tail as he romps and flicks me wildly.

"We *played* tonight, Mister!" he chuckles later as we survey the empty floor littered with broken beer bottles. "Don't you ever doubt it!" Miss Macie is lazing on stage edge, smoking and singing quietly to herself, gazing up into the spotlights through huge lavender glasses.

FEBRUARY 7—HARLEM.

He's sitting on the front stoop in his puffy blue Triple-Fat Goose parka when I arrive, sucking on a lemon to cut phlegm out of his throat. A sunny, cold Monday, midmorning. I back my Honda onto the sidewalk—he shoos jump-roping children—and we load, swinging the Sears clamshell up onto the roof and yanking straps tight. Miss Macie is wearing a kicky new pair of plaid tennis shoes. "Flo-ri-*da*," she murmurs happily, arranging parcels in her backseat hideout, crowded by our bulky amps.

"You got my shirt bag, Miss Baby?" her husband calls out.

"You know I do."

"Thank you, ma'am." A minute later, all hatches battened, he eases into the passenger side and winks. "Drive on, Jones!"

We switch off just shy of the Delaware Memorial Bridge, a clean, beautiful arc lofting us south. Mister Satan lights a cigarette at the helm, insists I take one, and tells me stories about his days as an army paratrooper in Germany back in the Fifties. The Mercedes coupe he'd owned, the huge German fellow who'd saved his life one night in a canteen brawl with a black soldier from Alabama. Parachute jumps from two thousand feet. "My main musical thing at that point was piano, from growing up in the church. Then Elvis Presley came along making all *kind* of money playing guitar, and I got smart." The car is quiet, purring along. He glances over his shoulder at his dozing wife, back at the road. "That's the *evilest* woman in God's creation," he rasps tenderly. "You just don't know."

FEBRUARY 8—ROCKY MOUNT, N.C.

An early start after good sleep at Motel 6. Bumper sticker on the Florida-plated truck parked next door: MY WIFE SAID IF I GO FISHING ONE MORE TIME SHE'LL LEAVE ME. GOD I'M GONNA MISS HER.

At a truck stop near Florence, South Carolina, I notice a "Best of Little Anthony and the Imperials" cassette in the stack by the register and toss it in with my coffee. I've bought King Curtis and Marvin Gaye for the same reason—guys Mister Satan used to work for—on previous trips. Back in the car, Anthony's sugary lyricism surprises me; hard to picture the bluesman I know comping a novelty ditty like "Shimmy Shimmy Ko-Ko Bop." Mister Satan is sucking on today's lemon, smiling at the memory. They worked Brooklyn, Westchester, clubs that no longer exist. "I could play my behind off, I might *swallow* the so-and-so guitar, and ain't nobody clappin' when I come off because they waitin' on the main act. We didn't get the girls no kind of way after the show either. They'd be lined up six deep waitin'. They didn't want no guitar player." A few minutes later he turns, suddenly inflamed. "You gettin' what's due you out here, I'm gettin' what's *overdue* me."

We're headed toward Columbia, South Carolina, and when we get there in the afternoon the club, a place called Rockafellas, is closed. We stand in soft drizzle staring up at an old movie marquee rimmed with triple rows of bulbs, hundreds, all broken. We're act number eight or

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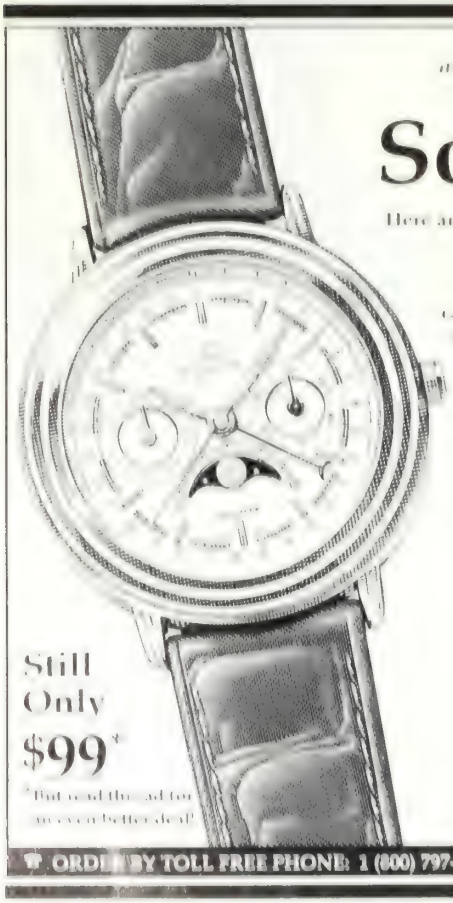


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In *New York Revisited*, first published in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in 1906, Henry James observes turn-of-the-century New York in vivid detail. Although written in 1904-1905, when he returned to the United States after living abroad for more than twenty years, the essay is as pertinent today as it was 90 years ago. In this volume, the text appears as it did when originally published, and is enhanced with period illustrations and photographs and an introductory essay by Lewis H. Lapham, editor of *Harper's Magazine*.

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the month's posted schedule: Scowl, Farty Earth, Cowboy Mouth, Blue Dogs, Root Doctors, Muthafuct, Screamin' Cheetah Wheelies, Satan and Adam. Our booking agent handles a lot of death metal bands: Carcass, Deicide, Gorefest — and bad connections.

The afternoon manager, who arrives by moped, is a bearless, gray-eyed waif, hucky voiced and efficient. The club is dark and smells of sour spilled beer, like every other alternative venue in America this time of day. My knee is killing me as I heave amps and reverb chamber through the propped front door, swinging them up onto the edge of the carpeted, chest-high stage. Mister Satan is padding around, placing his Randalls. Normally I'd clamber up.

"Could you give me a hand?" I ask.

He laughs harshly and keeps puttering. "You trying to get weak on me."

"I should have known better than to ask you for any goddamned help the one time I really need it." I wrench myself up and slam my amps around.

"Now you done gone and got an attitude with all that cussing."

"Don't worry about me, Mister Satan."

"I ain't planning to."

"I can take care of myself!" I yell over my shoulder as I limp tumorously back to the car.

"Congratulations!" I hear him yell. He's chuckling. Damn if I'm not, too.

Miss Macie mentions in passing when I encounter her in the hotel elevator on my way down to dinner that her room is trying to put poison gas in her cat. "Satan's too," she murmurs, looking distractedly past me. I never know what to say. She doesn't usually start accusing the rooms until four or five days out. My rooms, on the other hand, are inert, silent. It's my stomach humming that hounds me, raging as I lie alone in bed after the gigs. Coffee to bring me up, scotch to blow me wide.

Fifty-seven paid at the door — not bad for a Tuesday, first time in — and the crowd rippled with

electricity when I hobble forward on the raised stage to blow solos. Stabs of pain in six dimensions; I am truly fucked. Blues is about "worrying" a note: transferring your anxieties from their putative source to a flattened third with a rising knife edge, then abusing the note from every conceivable direction — pistol-whipping it, lacerating it, wringing from it every last drop of feeling. I'm inspired tonight; Mister Satan and Miss Macie are in there somewhere. A guy in Hell's Angel leathers with flowing black hair and a Charles Manson beard comes up between sets, eyes radiant, wanting to talk shop. This is South Carolina, so he has that chicken fried accent. Hands me a business card with a Harley logo: BLUE PAN JERRY, HARMONICAS: HARP ON, RIDE FREE. I lecture him briefly on tongue-blocking technique and he insists I drink liberally from his pitcher of Bud. Mister Satan has acquired his usual flock of fascinated college kids and is sitting on stage edge preaching mutual respect. "Ain't *nobody* never started no damn wars in the name of Satan," he hisses as heads nod. "Every single one been started in God's name."

Later, limping across the hotel parking lot with $150 fattening my wallet, I sniff the damp night air — vainly, through smoke-clogged sinuses — and feel helplessly fallen from the sense pure child I once was.

"This is dang sure the life," Mister Satan calls out up ahead, his arm cradling Miss Macie's shoulder.

"What's that?" I say, not catching the last word.

"This is the *life*." He chuckles as she heaves open the door, her huge handbag bulked with his sweat-soaked shirts. "I got my own private lobster, don't I, baby?"

"Ooooh," she swoons, little-girlish as he pecks her cheek.

South Carolina low country gives way to Georgia; I-95 shimmers through palmettos and pines, past billboards hawking country ham, pecans, the finest in luxury resort plantations. Twenty years ago my parents drove my brother and me



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down through this part of the country for an exhibition of my father's landscape paintings at a gallery on Hilton Head Island. We passed scattered groups of black people sitting in front of vine-covered shacks on the highway leading out. We stared, they stared. The vacationing population of Sea Pines Plantation seemed to be composed almost entirely of pink-faced men in yellow polo shirts and their families, served by quiet black people in white uniforms. The whole scene bothered my brother and me. My mother was bothered, too. She told us not to say anything since we were guests of the plantation.

FEBRUARY 10—ORLANDO, FLA.

The Junkyard is decorated in blues-club postmodern: hubcaps on the walls; chain-link fence festooned with steering wheels, miniature Jack Daniel's bottles, lengths of garden hose; an EAT MORE POSSUM sign next to the men's bathroom; one red high-heel shoe. The bartender has a trim brown mustache and tells me he's a native of North Fort Meyers, "where the church and the tittie bar share the same parking lot." Last time we worked here Mister Satan's parents drove over from St. Petersburg. His father, a carpenter and deacon, had never seen him play. His mother—also in her late seventies—had never been inside an establishment that served liquor. They both called him Sterling. I wasn't sure what I should call him in their presence. His father came forward in mid-set and stood next to the raised stage, a tall, stooped man in a dark suit, head lowered, listening, smiling to himself. He pulled me aside later, while Mister Satan was catching up with his mother and baby sister, a computer programmer for NASA. "I like the way you blowed that harmonica," he said. "Yes indeed. Y'all can play. How long you and Sterling been together?"

"Seven years," I said.

"Shoot," he chuckled. "He never put up with anybody else half that long."

Tonight, the club has another guest: Jesse Stone, songwriter and arranger, a key player in the legendary Atlantic Records rhythm-and-blues stable. Mister Satan leaps up pleased to see him. "Oh She Was Pretty," a sweetly lyric tune on *Mother Mojo*, was co-written in 1966 by Jesse Stone and Sterling Magee. The two men embrace. Stone is ninety and looks seventy, with a smooth brown skull; he is more alert than either of us and regards Mister Satan with the bemused indulgence of an old man. Within five minutes the small talk has been dispensed with and Mister Satan is passionately expounding on the higher math contained within one of his hand-carved *Mother Mojo* jigsaw puzzles. Parabolic black-and-gold shards are scattered across the table. Mister Satan's interpretive strategies have more in common with tarot than geometry; his delphic pronouncements are invariably taken by mystified observers—white and black—in a spirit of suspended disbelief.

Jesse Stone will have none of it. He's waving his hand impatiently. "Everything you say already been proved impossible looong ago."

"You said that."

"I'm talking basic geometry, Sterling. Ain't no circle got more than 360 degrees no matter what you do."

Mister Satan's eyes are brimming with ferocity. "That's a story told by a dead man."

"That's the truth."

"*Damn* the truth, man. Ain't nobody had enough sense to square the circle like this before or since."

When we finally clamber onstage and play, Mister Satan yanks me skyward and dashes me flat. Most people have no idea how intensely physical this sort of one-on-one musical encounter can be. "We feel each other," he's fond of saying. Indeed we do. Shared acceleration in the service of swing is a wonderful thing; being dragged bodily through the tattered shreds of an envelope pushed far beyond the rupture point is an acquired taste. Nobody who stands in my shoes for five minutes would laugh at the notion of demonic energies. I come offstage dizzy, wrung out, done.

FEBRUARY 11—MIAMI.

We've driven 1,443 miles in four and a half days and have ended up here, in a run-down motel on a lan-

uid blue bay. Lizards scamper into he shadows as we load in through liding glass doors. My room is damp with the smell of drying chlorinated wimsuits. I change into shorts and a ank top and take a long walk over a ridge into the backside of Miami Beach. A young woman in a flowred dress working the counter of a Cuban café brings me a thick, sweet demitasse with a flattened, warm andwich. I take a copy of *New Times* off the stack by the door. Every town in America has its own lternative paper, with band listings nd phone-sex ads in back. There ve are in the ad for Tobacco Road—grainy black-and-white photo, angled heads touching, Jim and Huck for the Nineties. The shot makes us look like lovers and has always vaguely unnerved me.

Tobacco Road is nestled in an old midtown swamp between futuristic highways that swoop down like monorail tracks and has a security guard in the parking lot. We load in through the kitchen door and up nto a second-floor lounge called the Diamond Teeth Mary Cabaret. Before we play I share a beer at a back able with the bass player for Ikoiko, the house band downstairs. He's built like a sumo wrestler, dressed in a cowboy shirt and jeans, and would be easy to imagine in the driver's seat of a monster truck squashing wrecked cars under huge tires, except for the battered aviator glasses and peach-fuzz beard.

"Miami was only incorporated in 1891," he says. "Before that it was an Indian trading post called Fort Dallas. Tobacco Road has Liquor License number 001, issued in 1912. This particular room was a speakeasy during Prohibition. They had a bakery downstairs. Al Capone owned a house on Star Island and used to come up. During the Fifties it was a gay bar called the Chantacleer and this was the transvestite room. The previous owners tried to make it into a stripper's club; couldn't get anybody to work here because Calle Ocho—the middle of Little Havana—is only a block away and folks kept getting shot. I been here since it went live blues in 1980, every Friday and Saturday night till four."

Later, halfway through our first set in the smallish packed room, Mississippi tuning suddenly descends. Even with perfect intonation Mister Satan is an earful; with six wimpy rock strings melting under his onslaught, not to mention cymbals and tambourines, he sounds like a street-rodding TransAm blowing itself out, losing muffler, tailpipe, and manifold in a screeching clatter of metal rubbed raw against macadam. Something terrifying and impressive is careening past you with great conviction, but it's hard to say precisely what. He remains a miracle, which is why I do this.

"Bring me my lemons, baby," he tells Miss Macie after the set, mopping his face on the back of his arm.

"Y'all sounded better five years ago on the street," she mutters irritably. "Here, take your damn towels. Shut up, Gussow."

I stare at him. He stares at me.

"I need a drink."

"Help yourself."

I'm quickly corralled by a busty dark-haired woman in a tight black dress who insists I sit with her and her boyfriend. She's wearing too much makeup and has fierce, hungry eyes; what I assumed to be a Spanish accent turns out to be German. "I like this way you play," she purrs, offering me a cigarette. "I like you. You are very attractive."

She excuses herself after a moment to powder her nose.

Her American boyfriend has been in Miami for thirty-seven of his fifty years, teaches exercise physiology at a local community college, and doesn't seem possessive. "When Brigitte comes back," he tells me, "she's going to ask you for your phone number. I think you should give it to her."

When Brigitte comes back, reeking of Chloe, I respectfully decline. She takes my hand as though something significant has transpired anyway, then smiles ruefully and murmurs, "You are very cruel."

FEBRUARY 14—ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA.

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What are the facts?

Israel surrounded by implacable foes. The countries that surround Israel are its deadly enemies. With the exception of Egypt, all other Arab states are still in a declared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO, is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly levelheaded as the government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with such an organization. Not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. The PLO has totally ignored Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clause in its "covenant" that calls for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages".



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it, But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and swiftly mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from about 40 miles to over 200 miles—they would rain destruction over most of Israel—covering in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs danced on the roofs of their houses when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews—and against each other. Their hatred is undiminished and their avowed intention to destroy Israel has not been forsworn—in fact, it has repeatedly been re-affirmed. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel.

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across a white Baptist preacher. This morning's topic: why we who believe in God are free from heart trouble on this Valentine's Day.

"Your belief ain't worth a damn!" Mister Satan yells, warming.

"I don't fear death because I know God's coming to take me home," the preacher thunders.

"Go home *now*, baby!" Mister Satan roars gleefully. "All God's graveyards ain't nothing but trophy yards anyhow!" He sticks his hand out for my slap.

A second later he's scowling. "Ain't no place in that whole damn book where God says, 'Thank you.' That's the truth."

By mid-afternoon we're rolling into Charleston, birthplace of the Confederacy. The historical district is quaint and well preserved. We know what you sold on *those* auction blocks, I think, gazing at the Old Market with Miss Macie's jaundiced eye. I've been reading Winthrop Jordan's *The White Man's Burden* as background for the trip. "The less lovely aspects of slavery kept popping into the open in an embarrassing way," Jordan writes, "as in Charleston where in 1805 there was much indignation about 'dead bodies' thrown from slave ships into the harbor."

We cruise past countless boutiques and a candy-store window heaped with creamy brown pralines. Miss Macie suddenly perks up. "Look, Mister Satan," she says, pointing at an old black woman sitting on the courthouse steps surrounded by Sea Island baskets, one of which she's in the process of completing.

"She oughta get up off her raggedy-ass behind and get a job," he laughs.

"Mister Satan," I say.

"I'm deadly serious. Get her an instrument and learn how to make people *happy*."

Miss Macie bats her eyelashes. "Are you gonna buy me a pretty little old basket, Mistah Satan?"

"Anything you want, baby."

"All right, then."

He has a hankering for fried okra and makes me stop at a Church's Fried Chicken in the black section

of town. Five minutes later he comes out with a $9 bag, including chicken and sodas.

"They closed down all the Church's in Harlem," he laughs, slamming the door. "Folks found out they were owned by the Ku Klux Klan. I gotta get me some while I can."

We've been brought to town by the Low Country Blues Society to open this year's five-day Blues Bash at a club called Cumberland's tomorrow night. The young Irishman tending bar this evening doesn't recognize me when I place an order for fried catfish fingers, even though my grinning face and Mister Satan's are staring at him from every wall. I sip beer, paging through the festival brochure: "James Brown meets Howlin' Wolf meets Little Walter meets Jimi Hendrix on acid is how we've been describing this duo of street musicians from Harlem." Little Walter is the Paganini of blues harmonica; I'm hardly him. Three against one sounds right, though.

An hour later I'm sitting at a neighboring table over pitchers of beer and Tabasco-sauced wings with Gary Erwin, Blues Bash organizer and owner of the local record shop specializing in black music; a transplanted Chicagoan with mournful eyes. Our drinking mate is English blues guitarist Dave Peabody, who has just been fetched from the airport after an eighteen-hour trip from London via Atlanta. Dave has made thirty blues albums and takes proprietary pride in the various Old Guys he's apprenticed himself to. These are our elders, our teachers, our living gods. Spiritual treasure. "What's brilliant about Honeyboy Edwards," Dave says fiercely, "is that he's *alive*. He's *survived*. That's what he considers his greatest triumph. And that's why he looks down on somebody like Little Walter, great as he was. Honeyboy worked with Walter back in Memphis when they were both kids. You know what Honeyboy used to tell me? 'Dave, that boy was a fightin' fool from day one.' And of course Walter goes and gets himself knifed at thirty-seven. Here we are, celebrating dead legends like Robert Johnson, when it's guys like Honeyboy and your man Mister Satan who really have things figured out." He pauses, stares down into his beer. Chuckles mischievously. "They've got us chauffeuring them round to gigs, haven't they?"

FEBRUARY 15—CHARLESTON, S.C.

We're up early at the Comfort Inn in Mt. Pleasant and ready for our taping at WCSC-TV, the local CBS affiliate. I'm hungover but will live through it. Mister Satan throws his twelve-string acoustic in the trunk—brought all this way for precisely this purpose—and we take off, flying over the Grace Memorial Bridge toward downtown. Fort Sumter is on our left, a distant speck in the glistening bay.

The young receptionist with fluffed blonde hair seems nervous as we wait in the front room for our producer—Mister Satan strumming quietly, Miss Macie casting her evil eye at blondness in general, me sprawled in a corner chair, partaking considerably of her mania. I run my usual multicultural scan on the staff photos beaming down from the wall—no black men, one light-skinned black woman. Our producer grabs everybody's hand with conviction when he comes out and has no problem calling Mister Satan Mister Satan, which immediately makes him cool. He wires us with Lavalier mikes in an empty studio while his cameraman sets up, asks the standard questions about how we started playing together and what our music is about. Interviewers never use the words "black" and "white" except in Europe, where people tend to be blunt because they lack the English vocabulary to mince words. My Ivy League education is referred to, Mister Satan's Mississippi roots.

We unhook after they switch the floodlights off and follow our producer down a hall past editing nooks into a large room rimmed with four soundstages: the sky-blue set I remember from watching Action Five news last night at the motel. A couple of sound techs direct us toward chairs and crouch to hook up fresh Lavs. Three large cameras are wheeled forward. We're in good tune and start jamming while they set

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levels. Mister Satan suddenly makes a sour face and waves his hand.

"Don't be pattin' your foot so loud."

I stop playing, stung. The earnestness of my foot patting is something he's always *praised*.

He plays on, eyes closed. I mumble something and do my best to pick up where I left off. I glimpse myself on a monitor at my feet: a young red-haired white guy sitting stiffly in a chair with his hands masking his mouth. Next to him is a gray-bearded old black guy in a red knit cap strumming a guitar, swinging hard. A very odd couple.

A sudden commotion makes us lift our heads to see Miss Macie striding away from one of the sound techs in a furious muttering huff—huge black handbag sagging under her arm, cigarette dangling and bouncing between her lips.

Mister Satan glances at me. "What's the problem?"

I nod at the NO SMOKING sign next to the ON AIR sign. "The guy just told her she couldn't, ah . . ."

"You can't *smoke* in here, baby!" he pleads loudly. "It ain't nothing personal!"

"Nowwwww, Satan," she sneers, pausing for a moment with her hip cocked. "I'll just wait out in the street where y'all think the black woman belongs." She turns and stalks out.

I find her outside, leaning against the car, elbow cupped in one hand, puffing away. I approach slowly.

"Can I steal a cigarette?"

She reaches into her handbag, extends the pack without looking at me, lights me up. I blow smoke at the sunny day. We stand for a moment, soaking up warmth.

"Thanks," I finally say.

She smiles to herself, rubs at an imaginary stain on her sweater. "Hello, Mister Gussow."

"Hello, Miss Macie."

We finish our smokes. I hold the door as she grabs her handbag off the hood and swings back through the reception area.

"Shut up," she mutters, chuckling.

The blonde behind the desk looks up, startled.

Things get back to normal quickly upstairs. Mister Satan and I are swinging now—heaving the ball back and forth, clutching and re leasing, a model of communicatior and tact. Barbecue and beer on a hot July afternoon with lawn danc ing after dark and plenty of stolei kisses. I'm being careful with m foot; it *was* a little loud.

A tall, white-haired guy with a face like Senator Fritz Hollings whom I suddenly recognize as th weatherman, is strolling by, dandy ish in his checkered coat and loafers He notices us, stops, then leans for ward—grinning broadly, ludicrous ly—and mimes a banjo strum. Th only thing missing from his act is th burnt cork.

My heart flares; I'm about to leap up. But Mister Satan flashes hi teeth right back. "Pla those ham bones, mister!"

Later, back in the motel room we lounge in front of the TV crack ing and eating paper-shell pecans Mister Satan bought a five-pound ba down in Georgia and keeps pourin me handfuls. "Get you a few more, he insists. "We call this baby a 'croak er sack' back where I come from."

Channel 5's News at Six leads witl a series of Charleston crime reports All the mischief seems to have beer committed by local blacks, much o it against one another. The two fair haired anchors—they could be hus band and wife—project genuin concern, like Zeus and Hera frettin about those silly Athenians dow below. After several commercia breaks the male anchor swivels to ward a fresh camera and smiles "And here's something *I* like . . . th Bluuuuuuues."

Our producer has been hard a work. The piece moves quickly, witl jump cuts and fades—me cupping m harp, blending seamlessly into Miste Satan's fretting hand—and doesn' jive talk or condescend. A couple c skinny, intense American guys wh enjoy the sound they make. Some body has finally gotten the point.

Miss Macie leans back on th bed, picking a morsel of pecan mea from between her teeth with fastidi ous care. "Y'all sounding good, must say," she notes.

"Thank you, baby," Mister Satai answers, winking at me, old eyes liq uid with delight. ■

Continued from page 6

motivated by a hatred of the poor. I'm sorry that Rorty did not do more to explain the right wing's need to stifle dissent.

A university's mandate is to make people think about issues, and with thinking comes questioning. This is very dangerous for true believers, whose certitude leads them down the authoritarian path of demonizing dissent. Although the right wing may not be quite ready to abrogate the Constitution, it applies a great deal of pressure on the media and the universities for more fairness, which, in turn, may result in the weakening or disappearance of left-wing views.

As Rorty points out, right-wing ideologues seeking money and power exploit the tension between two existing factions: a government they consider misguided, if not traitorous, which protects homosexuals and defends abortion; and those the right encourages to believe that abortion is infanticide and homosexuality is a sinful perversion. There is a rich history of opportunistic individuals using, even creating, these tensions for their own benefit. During the Cold War, the struggle between Godless communism and the American way of life was a springboard of power for people like Joseph McCarthy and Richard Nixon. Then, as now, academic freedom came under attack.

Larry Shapiro
Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Talking Big

In his pygmy manifesto, "Let's Get Small" [Readings, January], Thomas T. Samaras asserts that tall people use more hot water than short people: "[H]ot water needs for showers are body-surface related, baths are body-volume related. So a population of larger people puts increased demands on hot water heaters." This statement is flagrantly illogical. First of all, showering is a function not of body-surface area, as Samaras states, but rather of time; some people favor a Spartan five-minute lather, while others stretch the shower into an indulgent half-hour steam bath. Other factors, such as leg shaving and hair washing, are also independent of height. In addition, simple physics dictate that a tall person will actually use less bathwater than a short person, because he displaces a greater volume in the tub. Samaras's argument is as stunted as the stature he advocates.

J. C. Herz
Miami Beach

666 Broadway

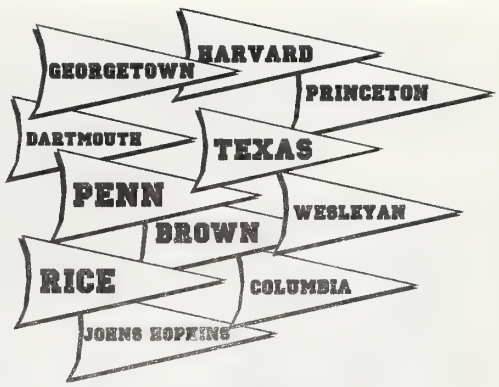
I enjoyed "The Gates of Hell?" [Readings, February], in which the name of Microsoft chairman Bill Gates III was assigned an ASCII value and found to reveal the number 666. Of course, a creative numerolo-

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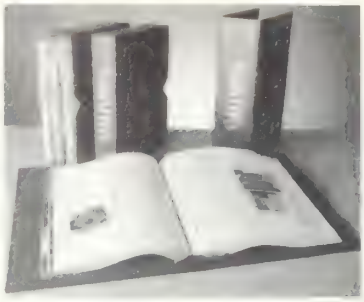


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S	E	V	E	N	W	I	S	E	M	E	N	O	F	G	R	E	E	C	E

NOTES FOR "SMART SET"
The unclued lights are the Seven Wise Men of Greece: Solon of Athens, Cleobulus of Rhodes, Chilon of Sparta, Bias of Priene, Periander of Corinth, Thales of Miletus, and Pittacus of Mitylene.
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 5. homonym; 17. homonym; 18. Coco-A; 19. dro(w)ning; 22. tyra(n)t*; 25. *; 27. *; 29. l-or(rev.); 30. (l)apse; 33. s(up)port; 37. *; 38. *; 40. Hose-a; 44. the-as(set); 45. hidden; 49. homonym; 50. *; 51. un(ziti-rev.)e; 52. an-not(rev.). DOWN: 1. *; 2. (c)ouch; 3. rel(i)sh*; 4. hidden; 6. *; 7. t(h)em(rev.); 9. scal(e)-d; 10. two mngs.; 11. l(at)th; 12. (h)edges; 13. two mngs.; 14. U-tin(rev.); 15. rev.; 16. *; 20. *; 31. "hot" in "op.(rev.)"; 32. P.E.-a; 36. L-ease; 38. S.A.-Ute; 39. homophone; 41. his*-v(oice); 42. vie-w; 43. m(in)e; 45. two mngs.; 47. rev.; 48. (i)s-in.

SOLUTION TO MARCH DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 147). (ROY) BLOUNT (JR.): WHAT MEN DON'T TELL WOMEN. Is there any bohemia any more? Are there any crazy-poet . . . characters like Maxwell Bodenheim? I'm not saying such characters are necessarily good poets. I'm saying . . . in Greenwich Village . . . today you've got to have two accountants. Artists are big businessmen.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 148, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the May issue. Winners of the February Double Acrostic (No. 146) are Zeus Yiamouyiannis, Columbus, Ohio; Mrs. Russell H. Eddy, Holiday, Florida; and Nancy Baker, Columbus, Ohio.

gist can manipulate the numbers to mean anything. Finding the antichrist can be easier and more fun than finding Waldo. For example, Revelation 13:18 is quoted in support of the Gates/Beast theory. Applying the same ASCII number value to Revelation 13:18, you get 792. Subtract 126 [(6+6)+6] and you are left with—666! Similarly, the book of Daniel is quoted (7:23). The ASCII value of Daniel is 429. Add 237 (verse and chapter) and you arrive at 666 once again. I don't even want to get into the greater meaning of the mailing address of *Harper's Magazine*.

Ron Hauge
Los Angeles [ASCII: 666(S)]

April Index Sources

1 *Harper's* research; **2** U.S. Office of Management and Budget; **3** General Accounting Office (Washington); **4** U.S. House Appropriations Committee; **5** Center for International Sociological Studies (Moscow); **6** Dennis Papazian, Center for the Study of Russia, University of Michigan (Dearborn); **7** B'tselem (Jerusalem); **8** Human Rights Arms Project (Washington); **9** *Harper's* research; **10** Victorinox (Ibach, Switzerland)/ Wenger S.A. (Delemont, Switzerland); **11** European Cities Against Drugs (Stockholm); **12,13** UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (Los Angeles); **14** Administrative Office, U.S. Courts (Washington); **15** Hugo Bedau, Tufts University (Medford, Mass.); **16** National Earthquake Information Center (Denver); **17** California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Sacramento); **18** KRC Research & Consulting (N.Y.C.); **19** Huron County Prosecuting Attorney (Bad Axe, Mich.); **20,21** Nation Institute (N.Y.C.)/Marttila & Kiley Inc. (Boston); **22,23,24** Alan Guttmacher Institute (N.Y.C.); **25** *Harper's* research; **26** Andrew Beveridge, Queens College (N.Y.C.)/U.S. Census Bureau; **27** Hawaii Department of Health (Honolulu); **28** VA News Service (Washington); **29** National Public Radio (Washington); **30,31** International Events Group (Chicago); **32,33** *Forbes* magazine (N.Y.C.); **34** Strategic Card Trading Inc. (N.Y.C.); **35** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **36** Motion Picture Association of America (Washington); **37** *Congressional Quarterly* (Washington)/*Harper's* research; **38** Roper Starch Worldwide (N.Y.C.); **39** Robert Rochon (Toronto); **40** Thomas Stearns Eliot.

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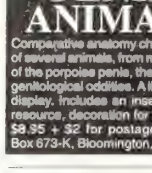
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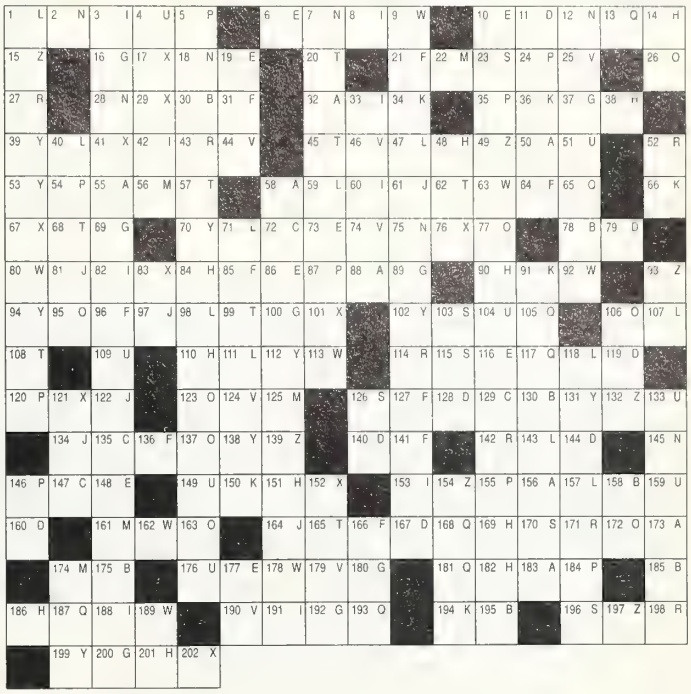
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 148

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 88.



CLUES

WORDS

A. 1926 Milt Gross book featuring "Looy dot dope" and Mrs. Feitlebaum (2 wds.)
55 88 156 50 58 183 32 173

B. "Imprecision of feeling, / Undisciplined squads of ____" (Eliot, "East Coker")
130 30 195 185 78 175 158

C. Beats, thrashes
147 72 129 135

D. Decrepit, broken-down (esp. of a horse)
144 167 11 160 140 79 128 119

E. Risqué, blue (hyph.)
116 148 19 10 177 73 6 86

F. Type of rail support (2 wds.)
141 64 21 31 127 166 85 96 136

G. Olympian cupbearer
16 89 100 200 192 69 180 37

H. Coffee and doughnuts, beer and pretzels, perhaps
151 14 84 110 186 169 182 48 201 38 90

I. Magic sword of old chivalry
60 3 8 191 82 42 153 33 188

J. Judgment
81 164 122 97 61 134

K. Primitive roofing
34 36 150 194 66 91

L. Handbook, manual
47 118 71 157 111 59 143 98 107 40 1

M. Boyfriend, fellow
174 161 22 56 125

N. Plowman's work
28 75 12 18 2 7 145

O. Foul-weather gear for the shoes and socks
77 137 172 26 163 106 95 123

P. 1949 film musical with Gene Kelly, Betty Garrett, Vera-Ellen, Frank Sinatra, et al. (3 wds.)
54 87 24 120 155 184 146 35 5

Q. Forget, exclude (2 wds.)
13 193 187 65 105 168 117 181

R. Burst suddenly into view
27 52 114 198 142 43 171

S. Examine carefully
23 170 103 115 126 196

T. Overdone, in a way (2 wds.)
62 20 68 108 99 57 165 45

U. Got the better of
4 104 159 51 149 109 176 133

V. Golden syrup, contrived sentimentality
44 46 179 124 190 74 25

W. Fade away
113 178 162 63 9 189 80 92

X. Appearance of a supernatural influence
41 83 202 29 101 67 152 121 17 76

Y. Alienated
53 39 138 94 70 131 102 199 112

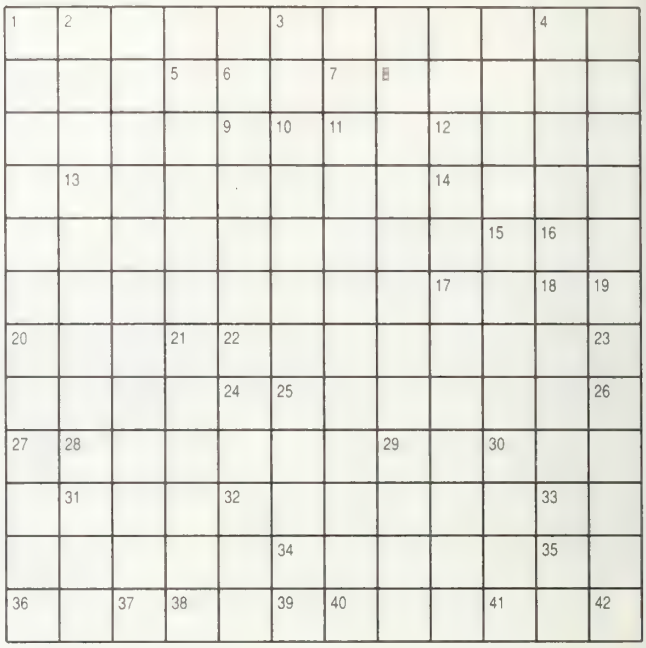
Z. 1934 film with Robert Montgomery, Norma Shearer, and Herbert Marshall
154 49 93 132 197 15 139

Quo Vadis?

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli
(with acknowledgments to Jeffec of The Listener)

Clue answers are to be entered in straight lines, but they may run left, right, up, or down from the numbered squares. A word running off one edge of the diagram is continued in the same direction from the opposite edge. Each square is tenanted by a letter in exactly two words. Answers include six proper names, one foreign word, and one abbreviation.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 88.



CLUES

1. Merger takes a bit of work (3)
2. Vegetable gets (at first) under a Parisian's skin (4)
3. Pug dog (5)
4. Edits story, loses it, rewrites, ruins everything (8)
4. I make big bucks—and sound like it too! (3)
5. Early fliers depart with costly results, possibly (12)
6. Stars talk of children (4)
7. Put together the opposite of one of the 10's, I hear (4)
8. Study this content: I could be a pup (4)
9. To chant takes time—that's the point! (5)
10. Catholics welcome Peron back (3)
10. *The White Album* in letters abutting (7)
11. Sit around in cave, get a temperature (8)
12. "Happy Birthday" writers often head off choppers (5)
12. I make music, girl—shades of old! (9)
13. South Boston College has two basketball teams in love (7)
14. Opera composer doubled up inside—he now writes musicals (5)
14. Deviant's habit has one in charge of another? (7)
15. Around one, bar shows "Two-Lane Blacktop" (4)
15. Art works sell out (3)
16. Doing work on tax returns, I ran into one-zip (9)
16. I offer to pay quickly in the place already mentioned (4)
17. What the diva got from the Met for being a shrew? (8)
18. Sauce-maker affected by a nose (7)
19. That's one attractive angle! (5)
20. He serves well who leads the pack heading off (4)
21. Quasi art houses, from the Bering Sea to the Dardanelles (4)
21. The evangelist one points a gun at? (5)
22. Travel a short distance country-style for vacations (8)
23. Fill up on Thai food (4)
24. Spotted the Three Stooges after a fight? (4)
25. Indicated being upset at men (5)
25. They star in fights that change to dramas! (8)
26. Dig, for example, two to four (4)
27. Latent redhead guy in period (7)
28. Place for orchestra leader starting off in disgrace (5)
29. CapeTown, not quite honest or backward (5)
30. Practice listening to UUUUU? (3)
31. If I got in, I could make sloppier moves (7)
32. Slide off after year's returns (6)
32. Mouth off for back wages (3)
33. Rug to pay for hearing (6)
34. Reagan appointee from East to appear heading West (5)
35. Goes without saying, at the outset, with vaster complication (7)
36. Glorifies young men in University garb? Quite the reverse! (5)
37. What a wise contractor does and a bad contractor leaves you! (12)
38. Upset essential baseball uniform information (7)
39. United Nations company has nothing left in square (6)
40. First name in basketball—hit-maker around East (6)
41. Never as easy covering wipeout (5)
42. Muse with low number (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Quo Vadis?" *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the February puzzle, "At Sixes and Sevens," are Patricia Buck, Elizabethton, Tennessee; Marta Guagliardo, Lexington, Kentucky; and John Dalbec, Canfield, Ohio.

WALT ODETS: THE FATAL MISTAKES OF AIDS EDUCATION

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MAY 1995

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LETTERS

Thinking Under the Stars

Edwin Dobb's essay "Without Earth There Is No Heaven" [February] is a delightfully subversive attack on science in general and cosmology in particular. Too bad it's dangerously wrong.

Dobb argues that objectivity in science is fine when it is applied to the mundane question of how things work but that it is of little use in determining the origins of the universe, and that the only credential needed to enter a conversation about the nature of existence is one's own humanity. As a former biology teacher, I'm familiar with this plea for open minds; it's identical to that used by fundamentalist Christians, the self-described "creation scientists." The fundamentalists claim that evolution is a human construct, a fancy theory, just as Dobb urges us to admit that all creation stories are largely anthropomorphic.

Dobb insists that we see nothing but a reflection of ourselves, of our worries and our hubris, in our vision of the universe. Physics, he writes, is merely an "attempt to humanize the world." Yet without a system of equations to accurately describe what would happen if Dobb fell off a cliff, he would suffer the same consequences today as he would have suffered ten thousand years ago. Developing a language of physics may be human, but gravity exists with or without our saying so.

Dobb's chief lament is that much of science is done by clubbish eggheads whose egos and impact are roughly proportional to the size of their last grant, not their sympathy for the human condition. He's right. But science isn't meant to provide solace, and I'm deeply wary of Dobb's desire to throw open the doors to all. What, he might ask, do scientists have to fear? Well, fundamentalism is a good start—politics masquerading as science.

Jim Malusa
Tucson, Ariz.

Edwin Dobb's essay rests on two basic misunderstandings of physical cosmology. First, he overestimates the significance of the cosmologist's basic intellectual act, which is to step back in order to view the universe in terms of the ebb and flow of matter and energy on the largest physical scale—or, in Dobb's words, "in a single glance." Every specialist in every field examines one aspect of the world to the temporary exclusion of others. The cosmologist's work in no way denies or diminishes the importance of other scales (including the human).

Dobb's second misconception is

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hat cosmology is dominated by the-
ory rather than observation. Cer-
ainly the *popular* pantheon of cos-
nologists is dominated by theorists
ike Einstein and Hawking, but cos-
nology continues to be grounded in
he process of describing what we
ee when we look up at the sky. The
Big Bang theory, relativity, and
quantum mechanics were forced
down the throat of the scientific
community because observation re-
quired us to accept them.

Physical cosmology, as viewed by working scientists, might well be solved soon. This will not end the work of science, nor should it chill any other human conversation. Since the time of Galileo, it has been largely voices from outside cosmology who have perceived it as a threat to the legitimacy of other ways of looking at the world. But our bullhorns are, and always have been, as paper cones compared with those of political philosophers, preachers, and others who promote their own perspectives.

David Smith
Department of Astronomy
University of Maryland, College Park

Thanks to Edwin Dobb for exposing the absurdity—or anthropomorphism—of scientific fundamentalists who claim that absolute truth, or the Mind of God, can be known via physics or by any scientific means. I'd like to add another coal to his fire by re-introducing a simple observation: As human beings, our ability to taste, touch, smell, hear, and see are all we can use to extract knowledge. Meanwhile, it is entirely possible that there are physical laws that function outside of our sensory domain, out of science's reach, and while we can imagine this possibility, we cannot imagine the *substance* of that possibility.

The notion of extrasensory existence frustrates the scientific fundamentalists just as the notion that the Earth is not flat once frustrated other religions. Until we can prove that nothing in the universe is lost to our senses, the assertion that physicists can offer Universal Truth is absolute rubbish. To follow Dobb's intimations, the dream of an afterlife is our best hope for that kind of knowledge.

Brian W. Vaszily
Rolling Meadows, Ill.

The footnote regarding Stephen Hawking in Edwin Dobb's article is entirely superfluous. Any person capable of reading an essay on cosmology should be able to distinguish the theories of a brilliant man from the cult-like fame surrounding him. The footnote informs us only of Hawking's physical disabilities, a gesture as condescending as it is useless. The "fascination" that Dobb declares "nonscientists *rightly* have for a mute and immobile wheelchair-bound man who would dare to tame the heavens by force of mind alone" (emphasis added) reduces a great thinker to a sideshow freak. How else, if not by force of mind alone, does Dobb expect humans to understand the universe? Stephen Hawking is doubtless deserving of admiration, whether in light of his immobility or not.

Wendy Wu
Middletown, Conn.

Edwin Dobb might just as well direct his critique of physicists at the molecular biologists who, over the past fifty years, have had the effrontery to achieve deep insights into our biological composition, thus leading to challenging questions about the mind and the soul. Are scientists and the knowledge they possess to be excluded from the search for the meaning of life and the nature of the cosmos because they shed a different light on our perception of the universe? Certainly not. All but a few of my colleagues are deeply interested in understanding nature, but in a verifiable context.

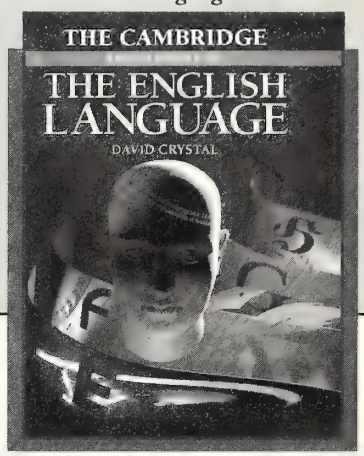
Thoughtful physicists have soberly addressed these matters. The late physicist Richard Feynman, in response to the popular view that science, in its merciless illumination of the nature of things, was an enemy of the aesthetic, wrote: "I too can see the stars on a desert night, and

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feel them. But do I see less or more? . . . It does not do harm to the mystery to know a little about it. Why do the poets of the present not speak about it? What men are poets who can speak of Jupiter if he were a man, but if he is a great spinning sphere of methane or ammonia must be silent?"

James A. Krumhansl
Former President,
American Physical Society
Amherst, Mass.

Edwin Dobb's paean to the soul should be required reading for seminarian and scientist alike. His eloquence approaches that of Aurelius Augustine, the fourth-century priest from northern Africa, who confessed in his essay "The Soul and Its Origin,"

> It is our own selves that we are incapable of comprehending;
>
> It is our own selves, who, in our too great height and strength transcend the humble limits of our own knowledge;
>
> It is our own selves, whom we are incapable of embracing.

Rev. Michael Bledsoe
Washington

Pop Socialism

Marc Cooper's ironic letter from Havana, "For Sale: Used Marxism" [March], illustrates how culturally curious are those poor countries that embraced socialism while it was in vogue. In Managua, one drives by a huge iron sculpture of an angry man with an AK-47 assault rifle on the way to the new and crowded Pizza Hut. Country-and-western music is popular in Addis Ababa. In Ho Chi Minh City, one can now attend bathing-beauty contests (in which all contestants are examined by doctors to make sure that they are virgins).

Despite their decades-long, frenzied pursuit of socialist ideals—often accompanied by coercion—societies as distant as those of Laos, Angola, and Cuba show no adhesion to socialist values and tastes. Cooper quietly hints that perhaps the end of socialism begins not with ubiquitous economic reforms but with the social jettisoning of socialist rhetoric and values. The cultural transition between Che Guevara and the United Colors of Benetton is quite a spectacle, but Cooper is right in suggesting that it is much more than the march of fashion.

Forrest Colburn
Alajuela, Costa Rica

Verse Vs. Verse

In response to William Kunstler's sonnet "When the Cheering Stopped" ["Radical Verse," Readings, February], written soon after O. J. Simpson's arrest last summer, I've composed the following quatrain:

> Your verses on O.J.'s fall unmask
> Just where your verbal skills prevail.
> They are their best when at the task
> Of keeping people out of jail.

Kevin White
Burleson, Tex.

The Thrill of Boredom

In the excerpt from his Dartmouth commencement address, Joseph Brodsky affords much reverence to the idea of boredom ["Listening to Boredom," Readings, March]. The irony that boredom is rampant in this age of overstimulation is both ominous and laughable. As Brodsky suggests, it springs from a collective mental atrophy born of modern "tools of self-gratification." But is boredom a product of life's dreadful "repetition," or does Brodsky confuse it with other tribulations?

As *Wheel of Fortune* flickers in the background, my roommate ventures, "I'm bored." The comment has the ring of "I'm tired," "I'm hungry," or "I'm lonely." Brodsky's suggestion that we embrace boredom, because it is "larger than [us] anyhow," elevates dullness to the level of psychobiological phenomenon. However, unlike weariness, hunger, or sex drive, boredom is a human construct bred by a new and passive way of thinking.

Boredom has blossomed because the notion that we ought to *be entertained* has become ingrained in us. Brodsky considers nausea, anguish, and solitude to be boredom's prime undercurrents; but unlike these physical and emotional conditions, there is really no excuse for boredom—almost any exertion will divert its wrath. Dostoyevsky wrote, "Originality and a feeling of one's own dignity are achieved only through work and struggle." I hope, for the sake of our cultural evolution, that we will come to value Dostoyevsky's "struggle."

Thomas Peake
Atlanta

May Index Sources

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NOTEBOOK

Washington rain dance

By Lewis H. Lapham

A party which is not afraid of letting culture, business, and welfare go to ruin completely can be omnipotent for a while.

—Jakob Burckhardt

When the Senate in late January took up the question of a balanced-budget amendment, I had thought that the conversation was going to be about money. At the end of the debate in early March, I understood that the senators, or at least the Republicans among them, had been talking about sin. The entire sum of their argument rested on confessions to their lack of judgment and character, and one by one over a period of thirty days and thirty nights they came forward into the well of the Senate to beg forgiveness for the weaknesses of the flesh. What they were saying, in effect, was that they possessed neither the courage nor the will to limit their expenditures, that if left to their own devices, or set free on their own recognizance, they would squander what little remained of the country's fortune. Not intentionally, of course, and not because they didn't know any better but because they were politicians, and politicians, by definition spendthrift, can't be trusted with the handling of other people's money. Thus their need, "the very desperate need, Mr. Chairman," for a cage. In the prison of the law, within a Twenty-eighth Amendment as binding as the First, maybe they would be safe—safe from themselves, safe from the Devil and John Maynard Keynes, safe from the abyss of debt.

C-Span broadcast the proceedings throughout the month of February, and as I watched the Republican senators take their contrite turns at the rostrum, I wondered what had become of the gospel of self-reliance What had they done with their albums of golden platitudes about "personal responsibility"? With their inscribed copies of William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* and Tom Peters's *In Search of Excellence*? How and when had they become the playthings of blind destiny and the victims of cruel circumstance?

On the campaign hustings last fall they had gone to no small trouble to present a contrary impression. Posing for the television cameras in the attitudes of firm resolve, they showed themselves off as the kind of people who welcomed risk and "hard moral choices," who knew what it meant to meet a payroll or break a horse, who stood on their own feet and chopped their own wood. When in need of an easy laugh or a bracing round of applause, they made fun of the shiftless and dependent poor, and I remembered Phil Gramm, the senator from Texas and already a declared candidate in next year's presidential election, taking a particularly hard line against both the extravagant distribution of food stamps ("We're the only nation in the world where all our poor people are fat") and the coddling of old people with expensive medical treatment ("Most people don't have the luxury of living to be eighty years old, so it's hard for me to feel sorry for them"). Although not always expressed with Gramm's belligerent self-righteousness, similar sentiments decorated the speeches of Senators Hatch, Simpson, and Dole—all of them dismayed by welfare mothers unable to restrain their sexual enthusiasms, by deadbeat fathers sneaking out of the duty to raise their own children, by unemployed miscreants in various forms and denominations refusing to govern their own lives and asking for nothing better than to be cared for by the state.

And yet here were these same noble Romans, these same nominally independent sons of the honest American soil, refusing to govern either themselves or the country, sneaking out of their legislative duties, unable to inhibit their fiscal enthusiasms. The Constitution assigns to Congress the power of the purse, but the Republican senators didn't wish to exercise that power (on the ground that it might prove hazardous to their chances for reelection), and so they offered a balanced-budget amendment as a means of shifting their responsibility to a mathematical formula and the judgment of the courts.

When the legislation failed to pass, on March 2, by the theatrical margin of a single vote, Pete Domenici, chairman of the Senate budget committee, was quick to provide the excuse that satisfied the purposes of all present. In the absence of a Constitutional amendment, he said, "it'll be very difficult to balance the budget." But after so many fine and self-flagellating speeches, certainly nobody could blame the Republicans for the government's financial disorder. Neither were the Democrats at fault (because they belonged to the minority party), and after a month of handsomely staged debate, the winter morality play was brought to a close with the best and happiest of all possible endings: nothing changed, everybody was given the chance to act a hero's part, and nobody was responsible.

If I've been reading the papers cor-

rectly, the bulk of the legislation put forward in Congress during the first hundred days of the Republican supremacy aspires to more or less the same benign result. The House of Representatives busied itself all winter with a series of measures restricting the government's authority to act on behalf of such a thing as the common good. Let the corporations do as they please—pillage the environment, falsify their advertising, rig the securities markets—and it is none of the federal government's business to interfere with the will of heaven. Let the several states do as they please—with the criminal laws, or the schools, or the money meant for the relief of the poor—and again it is not the responsibility of the federal government to attempt the amelioration of man's inhumanity to man. A bill assigning a line-item budget veto to the President (thus further reducing the congressional power of the purse) was followed by the appointing of a nonpartisan commission to decide which of the nation's military bases must be closed, or reconfigured, or sold for scrap.

By early March it was apparent that the Congress hoped to rid itself of as many obligations as it could sell at auction or conveniently refer to somebody else, and I was reminded of a sentence that I had once come across in the writing of Thomas Jefferson: "I have no ambition to govern men; it is a painful and thankless office." The reluctance is nonpartisan, and the safest escape from responsibility (for Democrats as well as Republicans) requires the substitution of the appearance of a thing for the substance of a thing—a balanced-budget amendment that doesn't balance the budget, a Contract with America that never takes effect. The distinction was explained to me very early in my acquaintance with Washington, in the second year of the Kennedy Administration, by N., a college classmate with whom I had studied the histories of Henry Adams and the novels of Henry James. He had meant to become a professor of American literature, but he had been caught up in the excitements of "The New Frontier" and had come to Washington with the vanguard of intellectual mercenaries rallying to the banners of moral crusade. Within a few months of his arrival he found himself translated into an administrative assistant on Capitol Hill, and he had discovered that appearances were light and substances were heavy. An appearance could be shifted as easily as a potted palm, and on different days of the week, or in different committees of the Congress, it could be transformed into something that it was not. Substance resembled alimony and steamer trunks.

Comfortably established in the inner office of the senator for whom he carried messages, N. received me with an air of condescension appropriate to his rank as a tribune of the people. The senator was out of town for the afternoon, making speeches in the home counties, and N. was seated with his feet on the senator's desk, smoking one of the senator's cigars. He was a vain and self-important man, combining in his own person most of the worst traits of the McLaughlin Group, but he was no fool, and he had been diligent in his study of the Congress. During his term of service to a politician whom he had learned to despise, he had read all the briefing books, all the testimony, and all the tabulations of all the votes.

He had come to understand that the Congress didn't wish to govern. Certainly it didn't want to correct any of the country's more difficult or intractable social disorders. What was wanted was not the solution to a problem (which belonged to the realm of substance, heavy and unpleasant) but the appearance of a solution—an artful word or image sufficient to sustain the impression of virtuous authority, of a government that knew what it was about, of people who were in command of events and had some sort of idea in their dignified and well-dressed heads. In the gauze of appearance, N. said, the senators, like ballerinas, could dress themselves up in the romantic costumes of democracy and perform the patriotic songs and dances that were the wonder of an admiring world.

N. shrugged, smiled, knocked ashes off the senator's cigar, and opened his hands in a gesture of amused in difference. "Which is why we do a little governing as possible, an then only under protest, or if w find ourselves temporarily short funds. Mostly we look fo alibis."

Over the last thirty-odd year the search for the perfect alibi ha become both more urgent and mor sophisticated, and on the day tha the Senate failed to pass the bal anced-budget amendment, the *Ne York Times* obligingly found an ex pert, a visiting fellow at the Brook ings Institution by the name o Charles O. Jones, to make the nec essary apologies. "The Senate," h said, "is essentially an institutio that can't be led. Leading the un leadable is a tough task."

As an alibi for all occasions, th statement could hardly be improve upon, but it ignored the probabilit that the Congress never had any in tention of balancing the budget Had Senator Robert Dole, the Re publican majority leader, trul wished to force the proposition int law, he could have demanded th acquiescence of Senator Mark Hat field, who offered to resign his sea as a way of allowing the legislatio to pass. Dole declined to exercis the option—for the good and suffi cient reason that the Republican were better served with rhetorica gestures than with an actual short age of funds. So also in the House o Representatives, Speaker Newt Gin grich can propose violent measure meant to restore the country to it original and blessed state of anar chy, all the while knowing that h can trust the Senate to tamp dow the flame of revolution or count up on the President to veto the storm ing of the palace.

Prior to the Great Depression an World War II, the Congress con ducted itself in the high-handed manner of a nineteenth-century railroad cartel, fiercely protective o its freedom to act. The New Dea and the construction of the nationa security state sapped the legislative body of both its independence an its resolve, and by 1950 President Truman could blithely declare a wa

in Korea without bothering to ask Congress for its opinion, much less its advice and consent. Following the resignation of President Richard Nixon and the loss of the Vietnam War, Congress briefly remembered its prerogatives, and for a few years it threatened to assert its constitutional authority to shape the country's laws. The impulse faded during the Reagan Administration. What was to be gained by possibly injurious argument when it was easier to go along with the fiction of Paradise regained? Eager to collaborate with the lobbyists amending the law to satisfy the rapacious spirit of the age, glad to inflate the debt with money borrowed from the Japanese, the Congress assigned the White House as many emergency powers as might be necessary to govern the country in its permanent absence.

The self-styled revolutionaries now at large on Capitol Hill apparently intend to complete the work of abdication. If they can escape responsibility for the budget (as well as for the condition of the country's rivers, jails, cities, markets, schools, and roads), maybe they can transform themselves into a national ballet company or, even better and probably more in line with the technological trends, into a regiment of radio-talk-show guests, free to discuss, solemnly and perhaps forever, precisely those issues (sex and American history, family values, school prayer, and "moral responsibility") that the federal government can do absolutely nothing about.

But if the search for the perfect alibi is as nonpartisan as the hope of hitting the lottery and the all-American quest for true romance, neither is it specific to politicians. Our native genius for dodging blame matches our talent for staging aerobic dance routines, and when confronted with the prospect of a decision—about who sits in the corner office, or where to build the factory, or what name to attach to the product or the heroine—we draw back from the precipice of action and send for a committee. In our campaign and commencement speeches we profess our ardent love of freedom and congratulate one another on our rough-hewn individualism, our scoffing at convention, our rebel's nonconformist heart. If the images protest too much (in the ads for Ralph Lauren's clothes as well as in the commercials selling trucks) possibly it is because we know the story is so seldom true. Encountered in person instead of in the movies, freedom proves a good deal less of a risk-free environment than it appears in its press notices, and when we can't escape responsibility by referring the decision to a computer program or a company policy we bind ourselves with addictive drugs or drift off into the narcotic haze of twenty-four-hour television—never of our own free will, of course, but because we can't help ourselves, because father was a politician or mother left us out in the rain.

Although I've never come across the theorem in a science text, I suspect that the law of the conservation of risk behaves in a manner analogous to the law of the conservation of energy. The risk can be made to move around in time and space, as if it were the ace of diamonds in a game of three-card monte, but it doesn't disappear. The Congress might exempt the corporations from the chore of caring for their customers (or the land and water from which they extract their profits), but then the risk becomes political instead of economic. The limited partners can buy bigger houses in Palm Springs, but they have to hire more bodyguards and travel to Iceland to see a living fish.

Reading the divinations of the future that now appear every three or four days in the popular press as well as the policy journals, I gather that we can look forward to steadily rising degrees of risk in a world unable to suppress its appetite for financial speculation or its passion for civil war. If matters become as bleak as the best-selling prophets say, I expect the congressional corps de ballet to achieve a level of performance unmatched since Nijinsky danced Petrushka or the immortal Markova astonished Moscow with the tragic beauty of her dying swan. ■

THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF WHITEWATER

A symposium sponsored by Harper's Magazine

National Press Club, October 25, 1994

In the October 1994 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Gene Lyons's article "Fool for Scandal: How the *New York Times* Got Whitewater Wrong" examined the *New York Times*'s Whitewater reporting, which began with a March 8, 1992, story by Jeff Gerth. Lyons revealed a pattern of selective reporting, inaccuracies, fact suppression, and misleading innuendo in the *Times*'s coverage of the Whitewater affair.

Lyons and other prominent journalists debated the issues raised by Lyons's piece in a *Harper's*-sponsored symposium held at the National Press Club on October 25, 1994. The *Times* declined to send a representative.

Participants:

Lewis H. Lapham (Moderator)
Harper's Magazine

Gene Lyons
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Stan Crock
Business Week

Tom Hamburger
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

John Camp
CNN

Trudy Lieberman
Columbia Journalism Review

Brian Duffy
U.S. News & World Report

Jeff Birnbaum
Wall Street Journal

Symposium transcript, $10
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HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of Pentagon spending in Newt Gingrich's home county last year to average Pentagon spending per county : 69:1

Rank of Georgia among states with the largest percentage of residents in prison, on parole, or on probation : 2

Average amount the federal government spends each day on paid informants : $266,000

Average amount it spent in 1985 : $68,000

Estimated number of Americans who belong to a neighborhood crime-watch program : 16,500,000

Chances that a U.S. federal prison inmate is not a U.S. citizen : 1 in 4

Average percentage of the federal budget Americans say should be spent on foreign aid : 8

Percentage of the federal budget that actually is : 1

Ratio of federal spending on foreign aid last year to federal spending on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting : 50:1

Ratio of the number of Chinese who own a television set to those who have hot running water : 84:1

Percentage of Chinese who agree with Mao's dictum "Never think of yourself, give everything in service to society" : 4

Minutes of "moral education" given Taiwanese schoolchildren each week : 40

Holes in one that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il reportedly shot in a single round of golf last fall : 5

Average number of dimples on a golf ball : 415

Ratio of acres of lawn in the United States to acres planted in cotton : 3:2

Number of black jockeys who won the Kentucky Derby during its first twenty-eight years : 11

Number in the ninety-two years since then : 0

Average amount spent on the tires used by each car during the Indianapolis 500 : $11,648

Average age, in years, of a car registered in the United States last year : 8

Last year in which the average U.S. car was this old : 1949

World's record speed, in miles per hour, of a walking robot : 13

Average number of rubber feet sold by *Fantasy Foot News* each month : 150

Price paid at a charity auction this year for a turtleneck worn by Jimmy Carter during cease-fire talks in Bosnia : $5,000

Price of a floral dress worn by Marilyn Monroe in her last film, from Norma's Jeans of Maryland : $35,000

Boxes of cookies the Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts must sell each year to cover their liability premiums : 87,000

Percentage of welfare mothers who are under the age of eighteen : 1.2

Ratio of the number of mothers who kill a son to the number who kill a daughter : 7:4

Ratio of the number of fathers who kill a son to the number who kill a daughter : 7:8

Percentage change since 1960 in the number of Americans who belong to a Parent-Teacher Association : –44

Percentage change since 1980 in the number of Americans who belong to a bowling league : –44

Year in which, at the current rate of increase, all Americans will be overweight : 2059

Membership of the British Old Bags Club, a group of middle-aged divorcées : 450

Number of Britons seeking medical care each year for injuries sustained while attempting to open cans of corned beef : 8,000

Damages paid by the Kellogg Company this year after an Ohio man claimed a flaming Pop-Tart ignited his kitchen : $2,400

Average number of buildings that catch fire in the United States each hour : 72

Tons of remaindered books destroyed in the United States each year : 250,000

Number of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays quoted on the Senate floor last year by Robert Byrd : 37

Number of times the word "Newtonian" has appeared in the *New York Times* this year : 13

Number of times it referred to Isaac Newton : 3

Figures cited are the latest available as of March 1995. Sources are listed on page 6.

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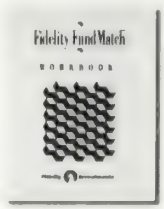
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READINGS

[Essay]

THE FATAL MISTAKES OF AIDS EDUCATION

From "AIDS Education and Harm Reduction for Gay Men: Psychological Approaches for the 21st Century," by Walt Odets, in the Spring 1994 issue of AIDS & Public Policy Journal, *published in Frederick, Maryland. Odets is a clinical psychologist in Berkeley, California.*

The AIDS epidemic has now spanned more than a decade, and it seems nearly certain that it will be a lifelong reality for most adult gay men. Gay male communities, especially those in urban centers, have become accustomed to a form of life completely unimaginable ten years ago: a 50 percent overall infection rate, 10 to 40 percent infection rates among segments of the young gay community, and 70 percent rates among older groups. In San Francisco, 30 percent of twenty-year-olds will be infected with or dead of AIDS by age thirty; the majority will become HIV-infected at some point during their lifetime. The mean life expectancy of a San Francisco gay man between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four is currently somewhere around forty-five.

Such figures translate humanly into a huge accumulation of loss and grief. Many gay men are rethinking the purpose and meaning of their lives, and feelings about everything—sexuality, human relations, and death not least of all—have undergone surprising revisions. Yet despite these new realities, public-health approaches to AIDS education have remained largely unchanged since the beginning of the epidemic. As a clinical psychologist with many gay patients, I have observed for several years the poor results and psychological damage our current educational approaches are producing.

Since the early days of the AIDS epidemic, the primary tactic of educators has been to provide people with sensible information and, for those not persuaded by good sense alone, to coerce behavioral change by the power of social compliance. At first, these prevention efforts were assisted by the natural fears that gay men felt. But although education provided the information upon which behavioral changes were built, it is not clear that these efforts ever provided the necessary motivation for change. In this sense, it is not at all clear that our education has ever really "worked."

Despite the concerted efforts of AIDS educators, rates of HIV transmission among gay men began to rise in the mid-Eighties almost as suddenly as they had plummeted only a few years earlier. By 1988 studies of gay men in urban centers were showing that about one third were willing to self-report the practice of unprotected anal intercourse. The real figures are certainly higher and are in fact astonishingly close to the figures we had on anal intercourse before there was an epidemic. In other words, years of AIDS education has probably produced almost no change whatsoever in the behavior that all gay men and their grandmothers know to be the most dangerous for transmitting HIV.

Unfortunately, a majority of AIDS educators continued to deny "relapse" through several years of soft and hard evidence. They sought to defend the "reputation" of the gay community, asserting that public discussion of the fact of unprotected sex between gay men would jeopardize funding and was therefore "politically naive." They also experienced genuine consternation about what was going on and spent nearly half a decade hoping that relapse was merely an illusion. "I can't believe men are doing this," one San Francisco educator said to me.

In early 1992, in the face of overwhelming evidence, AIDS educators finally "went public"

[Advisory]

THE CORRIDORS OF COWER

From "Staying Safe at School," a guide given to substitute teachers in the Seattle public schools by the Seattle Substitutes Association, a teachers' union. The guide was written by Claude Greene, senior security officer at Ballard High School in Seattle.

As a member of your school's staff, you are always in contact with students, not only in classrooms but also in lunchrooms, stairways, and hallways. As school district employees in the 1990s, we must watch out for our safety.

When you walk through the halls, always be mentally prepared, as a hostile situation could occur at any time. Be alert to what's going on around you, and, most of all, watch your body language and tone of voice.

1. Be sure of yourself. Be aware of everything around you. Carry yourself erect, be energetic, and look around. Walking slouched over and standing in a corner are indicators of being a victim.

2. As you walk, slightly to the right of the center of the hallway, you spot a student you wish to speak with on the opposite side of the hall. If you cut through the crowd you may insult students by making them move for you. And, of course, some will simply refuse to make room. To avoid this situation, go a step or two past the student, turn around, walk with the traffic, and then approach the student diagonally.

3. When you go down the stairs, it is important always to keep to the right. This shows that you follow school rules. If students get unruly and start to run and charge the stairs, simply stop on the landing until the crowd passes. It's not only safer, it's more dignified.

4. If you have to walk through a crowded hallway, do not walk with your body square. Walk with your body at a slight angle. This is less confrontational. In this position you will be less threatening, less "in the face" of the student. It's best to walk in an irregular pattern so you do not become an easy target [for abuse], such as a slap on the head from some student in the crowd.

with the fact of relapse. Acknowledgment of the problem seemed to be an important start. But the response to relapse since 1992 has revealed a disappointing, often dangerous lack of insight about what men are doing, why they are doing it, and how to address the problem. Educators have largely entrenched themselves still more deeply in earlier approaches, in the belief that they worked at one time and should work again.

Throughout the epidemic, AIDS education efforts have been marked by misrepresentations—not only withholding information from gay men but lying to them. As with most attempts to mislead people, when the misrepresentations are finally discovered, the useful components of the message will be discarded along with the untruths. Most of the misrepresentations of AIDS education have taken the form of "erring on the safe side," an approach that often makes the entire prevention message seem an impossibility. For many gay men thinking about lifetime forms of sexuality, our message—that every gay man must use a condom every time he participates in any sexual activity—demands an unattainable standard of behavior. The rigidity of that message has contributed to a widely held sense that contracting HIV is inevitable—"not if but when," as one of my patients put it. As a consequence, many gay men engage impulsively or unthinkingly in risky behavior, behavior that really *could* be avoided, at least most of the time, even over a lifetime. When HIV infection seems inevitable, many men derive comfort from contracting it now, thus eliminating anxiety about *when*. This is one reason we often see not an increase but a *reduction* of depression or anxiety in men when they receive positive test results.

One of our most significant and pervasive lies is that "most" gay men are having exclusively protected sex and finding it comfortable, satisfying, and unproblematic. This is not true unless one is speaking strictly of a statistical majority, and even that is in question. Many gay men experience protected sex as restrictive, inadequate, or unacceptable. By hiding this reality behind slogans like "100 percent safe, 100 percent of the time," we force the issue into the closet. There, like closeted homosexuality itself, the practice of unprotected sex develops a secret life with an immense potential for destructiveness. The gay man practicing unprotected sex today is in the closet about it, often without realizing that a majority of his peers are in there with him. Like the closeted homosexual, he experiences shame and guilt, and he begins to form an identity around his feelings and behavior that rein-

forces rather than inhibits the destructive behavior. Even those who only occasionally practice unprotected sex often feel they have crossed into forbidden territory from which there is no return; many do not even attempt to return. These men are entirely lost to our education.

The chasm between what we know and what we tell gay men is immense and bewildering. Although there is virtually no significant research from the last decade to support the case for HIV transmission by anything other than receptive anal sex, we continue to force upon gay men unrealistic and exaggerated doubt and anxiety about oral and other forms of sex.

In February 1994, the California AIDS Office released guidelines on oral sex for the first time. What is remarkable and typical of these guidelines is how little research of existing literature went into their formulation, and how marginally the guidelines reflect the research that actually did take place. When I asked California officials about important pieces of research, like a study by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute and an article by Jay Levy in the *American Journal of Medicine*, they seemed never to have heard of them. The New York study followed 6,704 men in the San Francisco City Clinic Cohort and found that in five years there were precisely *two* infections that might be attributed to oral sex. This represents a .0003 percent risk of HIV transmission over five years. Levy, having conducted a long, detailed discussion of the dangers of anal sex, reported simply that all forms of sex other than anal-receptive intercourse "carry a low but still potential risk of HIV transmission."

Despite the availability of this information, the oral-sex guidelines released to the public not only took an absolutist position on the use of condoms but also insisted that an elaborate regimen of safety precautions be followed. In effect, the guidelines banished to history oral sex as we have known it. It is little wonder that in the weeks following the release of the guidelines, a half-dozen of my psychotherapy patients mentioned the regulations as impossible to adhere to and discouraging generally, and cited them as support for their feelings that the question was not if they would contract HIV but when. One man said to me,

> I know that it's self-destructive, but so far as I'm concerned, it's perfectly natural to want to suck a guy off, and if that's all it takes [to contract HIV], I'm going to get it. I know I'm not going to stop that for the rest of my life. And then I think to myself, "Oh hell, why should I give up all the other things that are important to me [sexually]? I should do what I want, live my life as long as I've got it and get it over with." I can't see trying to hang around for a long life sucking on rubbers. I can't see how other guys do that. *Do* they do that? I'm asking, because no one I know does. I guess we're all going down the tubes together.

We must carefully examine the almost universal assumption among educators that if we give men "too much information"—which is to say, something like the whole truth to the best of our knowledge—they will abuse it, exercise faulty judgment, or otherwise come up with unintended results. As an educator at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation explained to me, "Directive education is necessary because men need to be told what to do."

The most sacrosanct expression of this approach is the absolute prohibition against saying that when neither partner has HIV, it is acceptable to have anal sex without a condom. As educators, physicians, psychologists, and gay men, we all know or ought to know this is true. Yet the nearly universal response to this assertion by AIDS educators is that such an "admission" would encourage men to do dangerous things. Part of the answer to this objection is obvious. Gay men do not, after all, need AIDS education to be reminded of anal sex; our practice of simply instructing men in behaviors—"a condom every time"—does not allow them to develop the judgment



"Good evening. I'm Tim, your waiter, and this is Andy, who'll be putting pepper on everything."

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From the Daily Express.

[Memorandum]

THE DRUG INDUSTRY'S BOGUS SCIENCE

From an internal pharmaceutical-company memorandum cited in "Therapeutic-Class Wars: Drug Promotion in a Competitive Marketplace," an article by Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler and other FDA officials, in the November 17, 1994, issue of The New England Journal of Medicine. *The article's authors report that drug companies are "waging aggressive campaigns to change prescribers' habits." To this end, many companies sponsor scientifically useless trials of drugs that have already been approved by the FDA; physicians are selected for the "studies" not because they are experts in their field but because they are frequent prescribers of a competing drug, and are paid "disproportionately high" sums for participating in the trials. The memo below was sent by a pharmaceutical company's marketing division to its salespeople; the FDA has withheld the names of the drug and the company involved.*

A POTENTIAL $10 MILLION SALES BOOST IN THE MAKING

Make no mistake about it: this study is our single most important sales initiative for 1993. Phase I of the study presents 2,500 physicians with the opportunity to observe in their patients the twenty-four-hour blood pressure control provided by [our drug]. If at least 20,000 of the 25,000 patients involved in the study remain on [our drug], it could mean a boost in sales of up to $10 million. In Phase II, this figure could double. It's logical to assume that, given a demonstration of success, physicians will more readily write prescriptions for [our drug].

We'll see the potential impact of the study on sales when we complete the evaluation of enrolled patients. The more patients enrolled and evaluated, the greater the impact. The sooner patients are enrolled and evaluated, the sooner the boost in sales. We can measure the impact at the territory level, and that should be a mega-incentive to place the study kits [with doctors] ASAP.

Let's make the most of this opportunity. Once your studies are placed, make those offices your first priority for follow-up. Remember: your initiative and the study can give us a powerful one-two sales punch.

to discern when a particular desired behavior is likely to transmit HIV and when it is not. People thus disempowered by instruction that contradicts their instincts—and often the truth—behave secretly, unthinkingly, and often self-destructively.

Many of the specific educational recommendations that we routinely make to gay men reinforce this fatalistic attitude. The idea that HIV-negative men should test for HIV antibodies every six or twelve months is one such destructive practice. To the extent that it is made explicit at all, the rationale for regular testing is that a man will behave "more responsibly" if he knows he is positive and can seek useful, "early intervention." The truth supports little, if any, of this rationale. We advise men to "play safe" regardless of their HIV status, and researchers have consistently found little behavioral change as a consequence of HIV test results. With existing treatments, medical intervention is generally useless until three to seven years after infection. And knowledge of positive status many years before the onset of clinical illness has been immensely destructive, psychologically, to many gay men.

What recommendations for routine testing *do* accomplish is to keep the HIV-negative man entangled in irrational fears of infection. By implication, he is being told that he should continue to be tested regularly because regardless of his behavior, he might have contracted HIV. The blanket insistence on protected sex—even between HIV-negative men—only exacerbates the feelings of inevitability that routine testing creates. The ability to have ordinary (unprotected) sex with another HIV-negative man is one of the benefits of being negative; when we tell men that the rule is "a condom every time" regardless of circumstances, we deprive HIV-negative men of one of the most immediate and powerful incentives to remain negative. "If neither of us really has HIV, why are we using condoms?" a psychotherapy patient asked me. "Is it because I might really have HIV? Or Steven might?" Many men express such feelings as well as the related feeling that the very act of putting on a condom makes them feel they must have HIV and are trying to protect their partner from it. We have "double-bound" men into such confusions with a remarkable show of bad psychology that says, in effect:

> Get tested and believe your results. (But if your test is negative, don't believe your results: use a condom anyway.) Safe sex affirms your pride in being gay, and loving gay men protect their partners (from what?). But don't trust your "monogamous" partner (gay men lie and cheat). Feel good about sex: It's natural and it's your right. (But get



"Honda Brothers in Cherry Blossom Storm, Tokyo," by Nan Goldin. The photograph was on display last month at the Matthew Marks Gallery, in New York City.

tested again in six months to see if you've finally gotten yourself into trouble.)

Such education is not a prescription for AIDS prevention, it is a prescription for madness. New approaches to education must tell the truth about these issues, must acknowledge that it is sometimes quite "safe" to have ordinary, unprotected sex, and must help men develop a sense of judgment that would allow them to make the best decisions based on their values and their appraisals of acceptable risk.

AIDS education must re-evaluate its fundamental purposes. We are not addressing the human needs of the gay community by offering or insisting upon biological survival as the exclusive purpose of human life. Lives must be worth living, and the epidemic itself has already made this more complicated.

The public-health experts and media analysts who now direct our educational efforts must begin to understand and include in those efforts the facts of human experience. One educator, explaining why AIDS prevention was necessarily directive, once said to me, "If you want someone to buy a Chevrolet, you don't tell him he *might* want a Chevrolet, you tell him he *needs* a Chevrolet." My answer was that we weren't selling Chevrolets; that the glib half-truths of advertising were exactly the wrong prescription; that to a man living in a lifelong epidemic in which intimacy might become assault and life become death, all we could offer was contemplation itself: the internal space for each man to think and feel and thus make for himself the best possible decisions that he might. We cannot tell people how to act in the epidemic any more than we can tell them how to feel about it. It has not worked in the past, and it will not work in the future. If we are concerned with the quality of gay life in America, as well as the quantity, that sort of instruction is something we should not even be trying.

WHAT GOOD ARE 13
HAVE SLIPPI

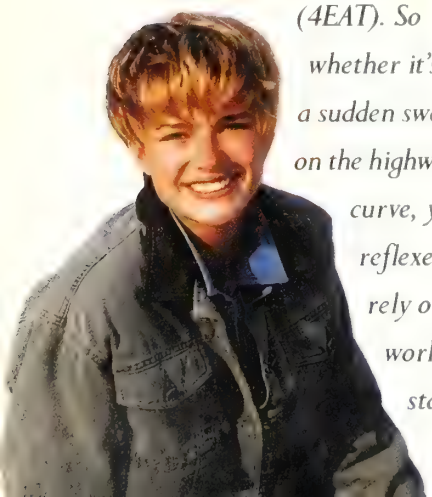
It's a question that has long plagued carmakers everywhere: how do you increase horsepower and still maintain optimum traction and control? A tough question, yes. But one that now has a very good answer. The 1995 Subaru All-Wheel Drive Impreza.

Horsepower Comparison	
ALL-WHEEL DRIVE SUBARU IMPREZA*	**135**
Honda Civic	125
Saturn	124
GEO Prizm	115
Toyota Corolla	105

*With 2.2 liter engine option. Source: Kelley Blue Book

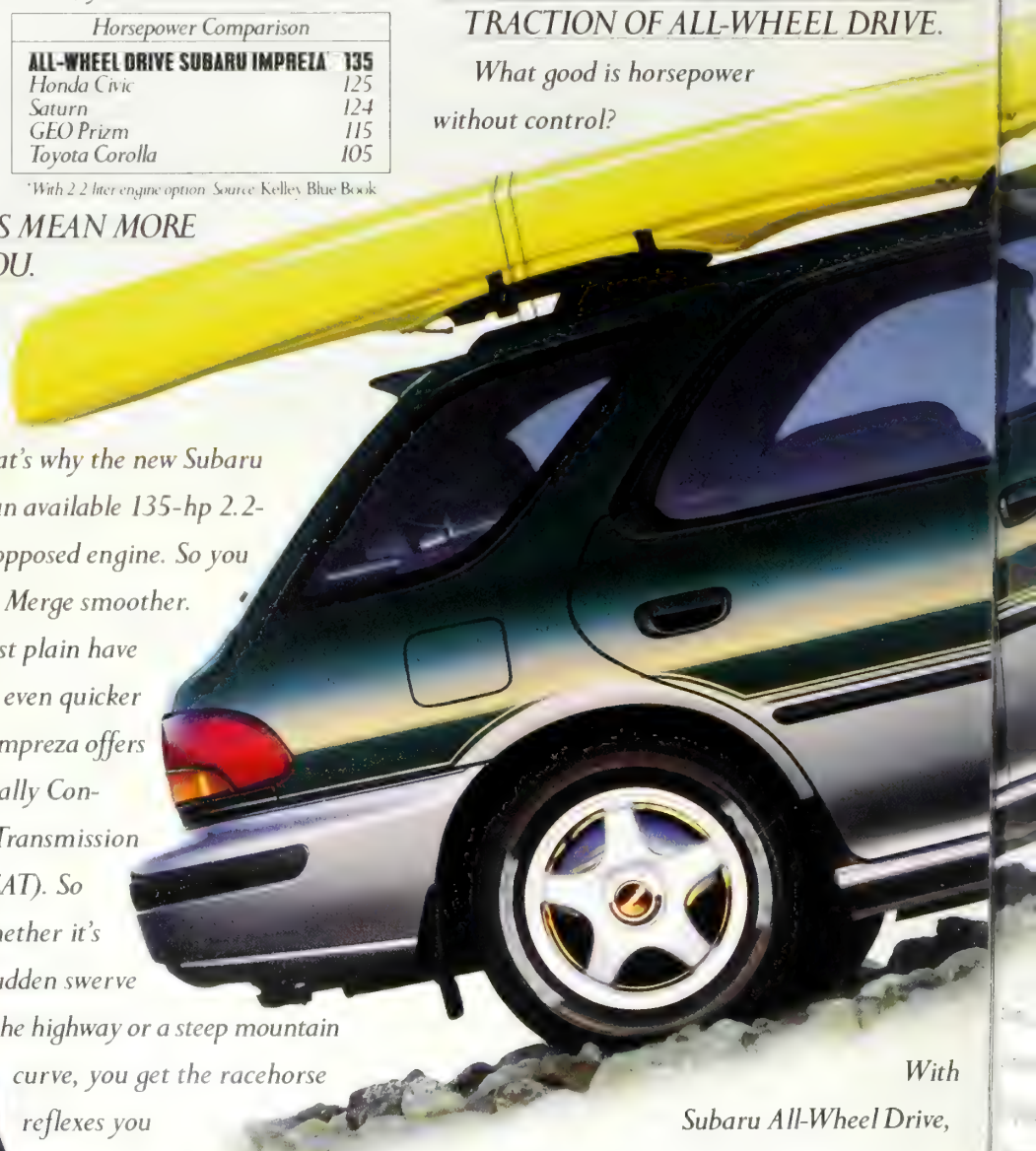
135 HORSES MEAN MORE POWER TO YOU.

It's simple. The more horses you harness, the more power you get. That's why the new Subaru Impreza features an available 135-hp 2.2-liter horizontally opposed engine. So you can climb quicker. Merge smoother. Pass faster. And just plain have more fun. And for even quicker response, the new Impreza offers 4-speed Electronically Controlled Automatic Transmission (4EAT). So whether it's a sudden swerve on the highway or a steep mountain curve, you get the racehorse reflexes you rely on. The workhorse stamina you need.



HOLD YOUR HORSES. THE SUPERIOR TRACTION OF ALL-WHEEL DRIVE.

What good is horsepower without control?



With Subaru All-Wheel Drive, you hold the reins. The Subaru All-Wheel Drive system automatically transfers power from the wheels that slip to the wheels that grip.

HORSES IF THEY
RY HOOVES?

or buttons to push. In fact, we call it the "ultimate safety feature," and it's available on every single model we make. So you're in control of your car's power – not the other way around.



The 1995 Impreza™ Outback Wagon*

VALUE THAT MAKES HORSE SENSE.

The new Subaru All-Wheel Drive Impreza starts at just $14,750† – that's less than a comparably equipped front-wheel drive Toyota Corolla DX. And with Subaru low maintenance built-in, your Impreza won't cost you much down the road either. So call 1-800-WANT-AWD. Or better yet, test-drive the new Impreza today. It's not just another car. It's a whole different animal.

Constantly monitoring changing road and weather conditions, All-Wheel Drive delivers the traction and control you need, when you need it. Actually helping you avoid accidents. And unlike typical four-wheel drive systems, Subaru All-Wheel Drive delivers full-time active safety. No levers to throw

SUBARU

The Beauty of All-Wheel Drive.™

†MSRP of Impreza L Coupe with All-Wheel Drive and standard 1.8-liter engine. Pictured is Impreza Outback Wagon with standard 1.8-liter engine. MSRP is $15,750. Prices do not include inland transportation, taxes, license and title fees. Dealer's actual price may vary. Certain items shown are optional equipment available at an additional charge.



"On the Golf Course," by Naomi Savage. Savage retouches her photographs with paint, then uses a color photocopier to reproduce them onto gold-leaf paper. "On the Golf Course" was on display in March at Snyder Fine Art, in New York City. Savage lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

[Duet]

L.A. BOHEME

The following song, "Leila's Song of the Wise Young Women," is part of the libretto, by June Jordan, for a new opera, I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky, *a collaboration with the composer John Adams and the director Peter Sellars. Jordan, a poet and essayist, says her libretto, which will be published in book form this month by Simon & Schuster, is an attempt to "bring opera to young people and others who haven't had exposure to it, or who have thought of it as an elite art form"; her libretto involves "contemporary issues like teen pregnancy and birth control, gang violence, love and sex." The opera will debut this month in Berkeley, California. The song below is set in an abortion clinic in South Central Los Angeles; Leila, "a Black graduate student working as a family planning counselor," gives advice on contraceptives to Consuelo, "an undocumented immigrant mother of two, from El Salvador."*

LEILA

I can't believe you're asking these questions!
What is the matter with you?
I'm glad you've come back to the clinic
But how can I get you to use protection?
What do I have to do?

CONSUELO

But what of my heart!
I love my babies!
My six-year-old son of El Salvador!
My seven-month-old *hija de Los Angeles!*

LEILA

If he's the kind of brother
With fifteen women on his mind
You better get yourself another man
Don't be a sucker!
Don't step into some Big Mac Plan!

CONSUELO

But I never have to worry
Whenever we're apart
Each of my children comes from
Something that I believe in
And a lover I never want to forget!

LEILA

Beat this message into your head
And lay down this baseline deep on drums
We gotta use condoms condoms condoms
Or go to the movies instead!

CONSUELO

What is more beautiful than the babies
Born of a lust
For justice and dignity?
—And me!
I know you think I am not so very smart
And my English it is not good
But each time we kiss and we start
To be close together
And I'm asking him whether
Or not he thinks that we should—

LEILA

I don't care how cute he is
I don't care how fine
If you can't be his one and only
You need to move on down the line.

CONSUELO

But who are you
Talking about? It is not me!
That is not my difficulty!
My problem is whether I am able
To buy or find food I can put on the table!

LEILA

How many babies you planning
To raise
In Spanish and English and God knows
what?
Don't you think two is more than enough
When babies and boyfriends is all
That you've got?

Girlfriend!
I am no angel and I'm not the Pope
But I'm not steering you wrong!
You better get with it! The rope
For hanging yourself up is not very long!

And as for me
Well as for me
I tell you the little I know!
Sex is great but
It's not the same as public education!
I mean it's not what my momma would call
An upwardly mo-bile pre-occupation!
It's not the end
Of anything!

It's more like something you send
On one wing
Hoping
The two of you will fly
Someplace amazing and then
Lie down but then get up
Together.

Hey! I am no angel and I'm not the Pope
But I'm not steering you wrong!
You better get with it! The rope
For hanging yourself up is not very long!

[Open Letter]

IN DEFENSE OF THE MEGAFILM

From a full-page advertisement placed in Variety *and the* Hollywood Reporter *in January by David N. Twohy. Twohy is one of the six screenwriters who worked on* Waterworld, *an action movie produced by and starring Kevin Costner that is scheduled to be released by Universal this summer. The movie, which is set in a futuristic world in which the Earth is covered with water, has been plagued by numerous costly delays, including inclement weather, a diving accident, and the sinking of an enormous slave-colony set that had been built off the coast of Hawaii. According to an article in the* Wall Street Journal, *the movie "is shaping up to be the most expensive film in Hollywood history," with costs estimated at between $150 and $175 million.*

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE INDUSTRY

I'm one of the writers of *Waterworld*. And I want to tell you about a strange thing that happened the other day.

A film producer was peppering me with *Waterworld* anecdotes. They were the horror stories we've all heard: whole cities being built on water, hurricane delays, lobster dinners being flown in, and so on. But the real horror was this: after ten nonstop minutes, the producer pauses and asks me, "So what's the movie about, anyway?"

He knew the lastest news about the production woes, *yet he didn't know the first thing about the story*.

And there's the rub. Everyone in America seems to know what *Waterworld* costs. (If you've been out of the country, call up your grandmother in Rhode Island—she'll give you the running total.) Whole articles in major newspapers are devoted to budget speculation. But how is it newsworthy? I don't know of any correlation between budget and quality. Why should the audience know, or even care, what a movie costs?

When the studios start basing ticket prices on a movie's budget—*then* the audience needs to know. When a *Waterworld* ticket costs $60, like *Phantom of the Opera*, *then* you can start to bitch. But until that happens, *Waterworld* will be priced like any other film. Seven bucks and some change.

Granted, for some people in the industry there is a genuine need to know: budget makers want to track costs to prepare upcoming films and to avoid the mistakes of others. But these aren't the people who gall me. It's the

ones who call it "Kevin's Gate" before they've seen any footage. It's the TV reporter who calls it a "suspected flop" before she's even seen the trailer. It's the people who seem to hope it will fail because it'll make better copy. Good lunchtime "dish." A fitting end.

What these people don't realize is that there's not a finite amount of success in the world. If a major film fails, that doesn't set the stage for another film to succeed. In fact, the opposite is true: big movies drive this industry. All of us should *want* the studios to swing for the fences with something like *Waterworld*. Because when a movie hits big, there's more opportunity for other films. The purse strings loosen up for those prestigious films released in the fall and for the smaller films released in the spring. Or maybe for your next film.

If you're in this industry—if your job orbits around the writing, the shooting, the editing, the marketing, even the reviewing of movies—let me give you a tip: stop gnawing on the hand that feeds you. Just shut the hell up until the movie comes out. When it does, go see it. *Then* you can decide whether it's deserving of criticism or not.

And maybe then, too, the filmmakers will be in a position to defend their work.

[Proposal]

THE EXECUTIONER'S DOCUDRAMA

From a proposal for a half-hour television show about prisoners on death row, distributed in January by SHO Entertainment, a DeLand, Florida, production company, at a convention for television executives in Las Vegas. According to the proposal, each episode of Death Row: True Stories *will feature someone "currently on Death Row or executed in the past" and will use "dramatic reenactments, personal interviews and news clips [to] present a fresh, unbiased, informative, and ultimately revealing look from both sides of the bars."*

WHY WILL AMERICA TUNE IN TO *DEATH ROW: TRUE STORIES?*

It's timely!

Every day, the death penalty is a topic in newspapers, magazines, TV talk shows, novels, and movies. Witness best-selling novelist John Grisham's latest novel, *The Chamber*—about death row. Or Sharon Stone's next movie, *Last Dance*—about a woman on death row.

It's provocative!

Do you know anyone who doesn't have an opinion on the death penalty? No matter which side they're on, it's something people are passionate about.

It looks great!

Every episode will be made with the care and quality demonstrated in our pilot, "Special Edition: Women on Death Row."

Martin Milner's a great host!

Audiences remember Milner fondly from *Adam 12* and *Route 66*.

It's focused!

From the name of the show alone, audiences know just what they're going to get.

It's life or death!

Unlike those cop shows that deal with all kinds of cases, our shows are linked by the ultimate penalty for a crime—death!

[Portrait]

JACKIE, ICON IN MOTION

From Jackie Under My Skin: Interpreting an Icon, *by Wayne Koestenbaum, to be published this month by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Koestenbaum is a professor of English at Yale University and is the author of* The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire. *An excerpt from that book appeared in the February 1993 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Jacqueline Onassis was a figure of transportation. She seemed to have surreal powers of movement and metamorphosis. She sailed away on the *Christina*. She rode in motorcades. She flew on *Air Force One*. She appeared at a gala and then disappeared—how many months before she'd be seen again, at a performance of *Company*, or *Hair*, or a dinner at the Metropolitan Museum of Art? Photographs of Jackie catch her *en passant*, moving quickly from one site to another, from Onassis's apartment on the Avenue Foch in Paris to their villa in Glifáhda, from a bullfight in Seville to the ruins in Angkor Wat.

Her appearances were brief: a one-minute speech thanking the nation for its condolence letters, a quick photo opportunity outside an art opening. The speed itself seemed a form of insouciance, arrogance. Jackie making another

appearance, another exit, was liable to provoke envious wisecracks or awestruck silence. "How does she get away with it?" we asked in the wake of her transitory appearances, though it was never clear exactly what transgression she was getting away with. Her speedy movement in and out of sight constituted a type of heroism—heroic, to escape quickly, unscathed; heroic, to leave no trace but a photograph; heroic, to make so indelible an imprint with so little apparent effort, to achieve immortality without wanting it or doing anything to merit it.

I saw her four times in person. The first time was at the opening of a new building at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. I stood as close to the ceremony as security allowed. From that event I remember only that Jackie managed to continue a conversation with her companion (some relative) while she walked from behind the concealing screen to the folding chairs gathered on a platform or on the grass. I remember her reddish hair, and my sense of luck and caravansary—there I stood, witnessing one of the world's floating, elusive foundations! The second time I saw her was at my Harvard graduation. She was sitting at a table with Caroline, under a tree, in the Yard; as I walked past them, I slowed down to observe more closely. I wish I could report more particulars, details that don't register in photos. All I remember is a large beautiful face, and the knowledge that an abstraction (historic Jackie O) was coinciding with a presence (Mrs. Onassis on the lawn); the instant of coincidence, of convergence, made, in my brain, a mild sound—the sound of *proof*. Seeing Jackie, I'd proven something—that she existed.

The third time I saw Jackie in person was at the movies in Manhattan—the Paris Theater, near the Plaza Hotel. I was there with my mother and my boyfriend to see *A Sunday in the Country*, a French film by Bertrand Tavernier. I remember wondering whether Jackie had ever met the filmmaker, or whether an interest in French-style pastoral outings and tranquillities had prompted her to see *Sunday*. At this Jackie sighting, I was aware of divergence rather than convergence: as I realized that the woman waiting in the ticket line was actually Jackie Onassis, I found it difficult to reconcile one fact of her face—the jutting chin—with the archetypally boxy face I knew from photographs. The woman in line seemed a not very successful Jackie impostor. A second divergence between real Jackie and icon Jackie emerged when, once the lights dimmed and the film started, she put on glasses, slumped, pressed her knees against the seat in

[Astrological Guide]

TIPS FOR THE STARSTRUCK

From a guide to the astrological composition of Hollywood casting departments, in the Summer 1994 issue of Astro Caster, *a magazine for aspiring actors published in Pacific Palisades, California. According to Taaffe O'Connell, the magazine's publisher, knowledge of casting directors' astrological signs is "the key to GETTING CAST."*

WARNER BROTHERS

CASTING DIRECTOR	SIGN	ELEMENT
Jackie Briskey	Sagittarius	Fire
Denise Chamian	Taurus	Earth
Beth Hymson	Virgo	Earth
Carol Lefko	Libra	Air
Jean Scoccimaro	Aquarius	Air

Creative, innovative, a sense of humor—these words best describe this Earth and Air mixture sprinkled with Fire. An excellent balance of innovation and common sense.

Actors: You can take chances here, but make sure that they *go* somewhere.

HOLLYWOOD PICTURES

CASTING DIRECTOR	SIGN	ELEMENT
Maya Garbassi	Libra	Air
Leslee Feldman	Gemini	Air
Peter Green	Leo	Fire

With two parts Air and one part Fire, creativity should run rampant here—the sky is the limit.

Actors: Think innovative and creative but not crazy. Funny noses and masks would probably not be appreciated at this studio.

UNIVERSAL TELEVISION

CASTING DIRECTOR	SIGN	ELEMENT
Joan Sittenfield	Virgo	Earth
Ron Stephenson	Cancer	Water
Meg Branman	Taurus	Earth
Donna Dockstader	Aries	Fire
Anne Winthrop	Virgo	Earth
Valerie McCaffrey	Taurus	Earth

Mutual respect is the key here, for Water can turn Earth into Mud, Fire can scorch Earth, and Earth and Water can extinguish Fire.

Actors: Be cordial but not overly friendly, unless it's sincere. Know your lines and how to deliver them.

front of her, and fed asides to her companion. She was not living up to my definitions of decorum.

The last time I saw Jackie was the winter of 1993. Her cancer had already been diagnosed, I understand in retrospect, but it had not yet been publicly announced. The occasion was a party for a book Jackie had edited about India's healing plants. A few days before the event, according to the tabloids, Jackie had fallen off a horse and been knocked unconscious.

From this sighting I primarily recall details of Jackie's appearance, details I mentally compiled, while the event unfolded, as a dossier of proof, evidence of Jackie's uncanny extraordinariness. I noticed that her head was unusually large—out of proportion to her body—and I remember thinking, "Stars have large heads, that's why they are stars." I noticed that she didn't drink, and I remember thinking, "Jackie never drinks in public, she might lose control, and that would be disastrous." I noticed that she held her clutch purse with unusual firmness and that her fingers were large and stiff, as if with arthritis, and I thought, "Jackie's anxiety centers in the fierce hand clutching the purse. Being an icon makes Jackie nervous, and panic must find some egress, some manifestation, in body language." She never rubbernecked, in fact, she kept her head still, which struck me as a further piece of proof—that she was equal to the demands of her fame, or that she had *earned* icon status through unusual composure, a poise I was now witnessing. Admiring her microfiber pants suit and her fashionably chunky black suede platform shoes, I privately exulted: "Jackie is still on top of fashion!" On her lapel she wore a folk-art cross, a humble ornament for someone so grand. Again, I felt the pleasing zing of confirmation. This event confirmed Jackie's right to be an icon. And I remember feeling, sentimentally, that JFK had been a boor and an idiot to philander. How, I wondered, could he have cheated on a woman so splendid?

This event was abstract but also particular; unfortunately, the details are surrounded, in retrospect, by a haze made up of two clashing sensations. The first was tranquillity: I thought, "Jackie Onassis is here at last, I don't have to conjure her." The second was defeat: I thought, "Jackie will soon vanish, I'm an interloper, this may be the last time I ever see Jackie, and I can do nothing concrete with this fascination. I cannot sublimate it into any sane course of conduct or philosophy. It is an utterly useless emotion, and yet it gives the illusion of engineering and justifying my life."

At 6:45 she moved toward the door—and then unexpectedly veered toward a young editor with whom I was speaking. Jackie's face lit up. She said the editor's name. Had I wanted to speak to Jackie, this would have been my chance, though I had nothing appropriate to say, only a gushy desire to praise her magnificence. I understood how unwanted such a statement would have been and therefore kept silent. Why can't I remember more than a dizzy, drunken sense of my own unimportance and the futility of telling Jackie that she was supernaturally beautiful? The one concrete sentence of Jackie's I can offer is this: upon parting, she said to the young editor, "Keep in touch." Jackie granted the word "touch" an extra, aristocratic sibilance, as if she were saying "hush" or "shush." While she said "Keep in touch," she was already turning around to leave. Here, then, was evidence of Jackie's transitoriness: she wasn't even standing still long enough to say "Keep in touch." Shouldn't she have waited to finish saying good-bye before she swerved away? ("Swerve" is the wrong word, her every motion was stately. But "swerve" conveys the sense of accident and retraction, of being suddenly *banished* from her presence.) Everyone nearby seemed suspended in the amber of her mystic "Keep in touch," an envoi sent out into the recumbent air. Then

[Names]

HIGH SOCIETY: A WHO'S WHO

From a list of first names that have appeared in the society column of the Philadelphia Inquirer. *The list was compiled by a writer for the newspaper and was excerpted in Stu Bykofsky's column in the January 25* Philadelphia Daily News.

Barkie	Frolic	Pooh
Bunky	Gee	Sibby
Bunty	Happy	Siggie
Cackie	Kinnie	Taddi
Caughie	Marby	Tenny
Choppy	Metsie	Trophy
Diny	Minky	Weezie
Dodo	Peppo	Wiggie
Dudy	Perky	Winky
Elfie	Phippy	Wrattie
Floss	Pixie	Woosie



"Triptych: Men in the Cities," by Robert Longo, from After Art: Rethinking 150 Years of Photography, *to be published this month by the University of Washington Press. In an interview, the artist explained that the photographs above, which were part of a long-term project, were inspired by the American "obsession" with "seeing actual photographs of dead people and people dying"; Longo asked his models to "jump around like [they were] being shot or electrocuted," and often pelted them with "rubber balls, rocks, etc., whatever would cause a violent jerk."*

she left the reception room, and I followed her to the stairwell to see her descend. She looked down at her feet as she walked, just as I'd seen in newsreels: I suppose this was a precaution against tripping.

Jackie-spotting: she enters a room, leaves it, and deposits fantasies in her wake. Where does she go, after quitting this room, this cameo appearance? The brevity and rarity of her visits create a space for awe; do little to interfere with expectation; give the illusion that her life consisted solely of instants of vanishing, instants that were anticlimactic (they proved nothing; they only confirmed that Jackie was Jackie) and epiphanic (moments when a hypothesized star suddenly becomes flesh confirm the vocation of wishing, and confirm that gods and goddesses still walk the earth and are not merely media-manufactured fumes).

As a figure of transportation, Jackie seemed magical. In photos of Jackie walking through crowds, she seems transported by a flying carpet or seven-league boots. Many people have reported Jackie's ability to stare straight through them. Dare is the star's self-protective device, walking in public: she can't establish eye contact, because everyone knows her, and so she must stare ahead into nowhere. This variety of star sight, however, contributes to the aura Jackie projects, in photos, of intending to mesmerize the viewer, to cast a spell. Her friend Bunny Mellon called her a "witch" with "supernatural powers" (so Kitty Kelley reported). Jackie as witch: a tabloid headline dubbed Jackie "THE QUEEN WHO DESTROYED CAMELOT" (neglecting to say that she also invented Camelot). Alexander Onassis, her stepson, said that she had the power to "jeopardize a whole epoch," as if she were a Lady Bluebeard disposing of husbands, or else a Helen of Troy, passively altering the temperature of her time. The compulsion to see Jackie as magical—a Circean figure with the ability to vanish and appear, to destroy and to deceive—is not simply a misogynist cliché (throughout patriarchal history, powerful women have been condemned as witches); rather, the vision of Jackie as sorceress or sprite, an icon with the will to transport herself and to transport viewers, testifies to the strength of our imaginary identification with her. We think she's magical because she can enter our minds. Looking at photos of Jackie, reading stories of her life, we invest her with our own complexities, dreams of fancy that we could never ford without her image to assist us.

ELLEN COLTON'S DINNER PARTY WAS THE opening of the season. Her first dinner this particular year was to officially introduce Maggie, though she was already known to many of the ladies who were wearing her Miss MerMaid fashions. Among the guests was Mortimer Sheldon, a leather manufacturer from Massachusetts. He was a childless widower, his wife having died five years earlier. When his eyes first lit on Maggie, his heart beat wildly; he had found the perfect mate. Her diminutive stature, rose-gold hair and delicate features represented the child he never had; her petite, shapely body–a pocket-Venus, he called her–made her a desirable second wife.

Mortimer had little opportunity to get close to her on that first occasion as she was surrounded most of the evening by others equally eager to welcome her. He left early, his mind a whirl with plans to make her his very own.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

Maggie received a huge bouquet of roses tied with a green satin ribbon. A card was pinned to the ribbon with a diamond brooch: "Please accept this as a token of my deepest admiration," she read, astonished. The card was signed "Mortimer Sheldon" and as hard as she tried she could not remember him.

Four o'clock was the accepted time for callers and Ellen's home became the only place to be at teatime (although there were stronger libations for those who wanted them). Mortimer was the first to call that day, carrying a tremendous bouquet. When he was announced, Maggie came forward to meet him, took the flowers and asked the maid to put them in water. As she extended her hand he held it too long and kissed it greedily. Inwardly she recoiled from this unprepossessing old man. He was approaching fifty and the passing years and his unstinting devotion to business had not been kind to him. His eyes had puffy, dark bags under them, his whole being had sagged and his mouth on her hand felt loose-lipped and wet. Although he did not resemble the man in the least, a picture of Dr. Henderson flashed in Maggie's mind's eye. A few years ago, Maggie would have run from him; but now she called on her newly acquired sophistication to handle the situation.

"Mr. Sheldon," (she withdrew her hand wishing she could wipe it off) "thank you for the flowers, but I cannot accept the gift you attached to them. She reached into a pocket of her dress and held out the diamond pin.

He pushed her hand away. "My dear, this is just a token of my affection. There is much more I will give you when we get to know each other better."

"Again I thank you," Maggie said firmly, "but believe me when I say I will not accept any of these expensive things of value. Flowers if you insist although I prefer not to receive anything."

Mortimer, delighted by her guarded reserve, said, "I am very wealthy man my dear, and it gives me pleasure to lavish treasures at your feet."

Exasperated, Maggie was about to answer when another caller was announced. She thrust the brooch in his hand and with a wave of her hand moved away to greet the newcomer. She managed to dodge Mortimer's attentions for the rest of the afternoon and was sitting quietly when she had discovered this insistent admirer had not.

Mortimer was obsessed with the extreme youth and enchanting prettiness and carved every afternoon always with flowers and candy and had decided but as long as I am living I will trink his diamond pin from the mantel later he caught her as she came to get him to receive a young law student who was also smitten with Maggie but secretly by the heart Maggie! Mortimer held out nadlie vally pulled her to the terrace I love you Maggie I want you for my wife. Mayor had his hands on her shoulders to draw her close slobbering wet kisses on her face With a free hand wrenched out of his grip and hand back and slipped him much force as she could muster called for help and came running ostensibly to Maggie's aid but it was necessary Mortimer was rubbing his cheek stunned at the expression on John Pirsy guiding Mortimer to the door was angry, but seasoned to the for the older man. What in the world is wrong with you, Morty? I told you to leave Maggie alone!" he said. "I would rather [illegible]

I LOVE HER

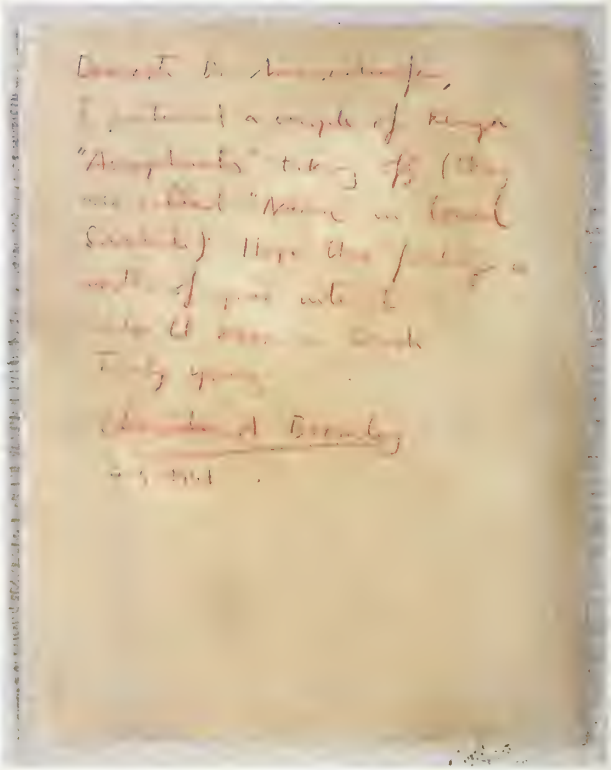
Mortimer whined "I can do so much for her" can you understand that she doesn't want this? She has worked to become well known in the community "She's only a child! She doesn't know what she want I can show her the world," Mortimer protested. John took a deep breath and a long time "We've been friends for a long time Morty and I'm so sorry to say this but must ask you not to see her again.

You're being cruel but I'll be patient. You will see she'll come to me one day. Mortimer babbled

And no more gifts this Not even flowers to [illegible] John had him out of the house by time and said as he had one of his staff Not even flowers stay away f


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COURTESY ZABRISKIE GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY

From "Fauna: Specious Origins," a "photo-conceptual" project by the Spanish artists Joan Fontcuberta and Pere Formiguera, included in Artificial History: Heart and Darkness, *a collection of Fontcuberta's work published by IVAM, in Valencia, Spain. The artists purport to have uncovered the lost archives of Dr. Peter Ameisenhaufen, a fictional German zoologist who, between 1933 and 1950, devoted himself to the study of hybrid creatures. According to the artists, Dr. Ameisenhaufen discovered more than a dozen crossbreeds, including a fox with an armored head, a swamp-dwelling clam with protruding arms that clubs its prey to death with sticks, and a winged monkey that attacks from the air and spears its prey on its single horn. The letter and photograph above were allegedly sent to Dr. Ameisenhaufen by a fellow scientist.*

[Scenarios]

THE WILLIES: AN INVESTIGATION

From a questionnaire distributed to students at the University of Pennsylvania as part of a psychological study on "the emotion of disgust" conducted by Paul Rozin, Clark McCauley, and Jonathan Haidt. The researchers theorized that there are "four main classes of things that people find disgusting: food violations, sexual violations, body fluids and products, and physical violations of the body exterior." In order to discover "whether people differ in how sensitive they are to each of these four kinds of disgusting things," the researchers asked subjects to express, on a three-point scale, their level of disgust at the following statements.

You sit down in a movie theater and discover that the seat is still warm from the last person who sat there.

You see pieces of dandruff on the shoulder of a man's jacket.

You hear a couple making love in the hotel room next to yours.

You find three roaches in your kitchen sink.

You see someone put ketchup on vanilla ice cream and eat it.

Several flies land on your sandwich.

In a science class, you see a human hand, preserved in a jar.

You see a man with mucus dripping out of his nose.

You go to a restaurant and discover they have snake meat on the menu.

A friend offers you a piece of chocolate shaped like a dog turd.

You hear about an adult woman who has sex with her father.

Your friend throws up, and you have to wipe it up with a paper towel.

You see a bowel movement left unflushed in a public toilet.

You sip some milk and find it has spoiled.

You are kissing someone passionately and some of that person's saliva goes into your mouth.

Your doctor uses his gloved hand to give you a rectal examination.

You discover that a friend of yours changes underwear only once a week.

You see someone accidentally stick a fishing hook through his finger.

While you are visiting a friend, he clips his nails, and the clippings fall on the carpet.

You see a small snake slither across your path in a park.

While walking through a tunnel under a railroad track, you smell urine.

Your friend's pet cat dies, and you have to pick up the dead body with your bare hands.

Your doctor puts a tongue depressor too far back in your mouth, and you start to gag.

You are getting your hair cut, and you discover that a tuft of hair from a stranger has fallen onto your arm.

In your dentist's office, you see a bowl full of human teeth.

[Poem]

HAND WASHING

By Gary Soto. From the Winter issue of Michigan Quarterly Review. *Soto is the author of the novel* Jesse; *his* New and Selected Poems *will be published this month by Chronicle Books.*

I would wash my hands
After opening the refrigerator
And looking in at the lunchmeat and tomatoes,
The blimp-shaped pickles in cloudy water.
I would take out this food,
Then wash my hands before I laid a flap
Of baloney on whole wheat, and then wash
them again
Before I pulled up a chair,
Using my knuckle only. I wrapped
My sandwich in a paper napkin and ate facing
The wall lit with sunlight against feathery
shadows.

I nearly gave up going to Mass—
Chalice that was a smudge of tubercular disease
And incense that fortified pneumonia.
I knew the priests were really good people
But knew they shook hands with the dying.
I was worried about the moisture nestled on
the hairs
Of their knuckles. I considered this matter
And then considered their robes as they
swished
Across the altar. I knew they would cough
Into their hands, then say, "Forgive us our
sins . . ."
After Mass, I used my shoulder
To get into the washroom, then scalded my
hands
With really hot water, then climbed upstairs
To eat a doughnut. I didn't shake
Anyone's hand, just nodded and made my
eyes
Kind of wide so that my pupils filled
With friendly light. And if I remembered right,
I talked using only a little bit of my mouth—
No telling
If where you were standing a person
Had coughed and left disease floating in the air.

I knew Catholics were coming around
To talk in tongues
And I knew that weeping men
Were coming out of really large closets—
Sex was that lily you wagged
Over the grave of innocent people.
I rattled my newspaper and read about them,
The new Catholics who held hands in prayer.
For a while, when my hair was black,
I attended the young adult group
And despised the air when we had to hold
hands.
One week I noticed three out of sixteen were
coughing.
And a week later seven of the sixteen.
I was never good at math but knew eight was
next,
And was beginning to feel a rock-like scrape
Inside my throat. I stopped going
And instead read the Bible
By the window and considered the fly, dead on
the sill,
And the plagues marching through Egypt
Toward hometown Fresno.

I liked my wife to wash her hands
And asked her often not to touch her teeth
In public places. She went along
And started pushing open doors using only her
shoulder.
I taught her how to pull a chair away
From the table and to seal an envelope
without touching
The flap. She listened with her washed hand
Covering mine. She was nice to me,
And said nothing
When she saw me washing not only
My hands but wrists and elbows,
Knobby points that touched public places
And maybe one of our dinner plates,
An accident that could cause disease.
If she had asked, What are you doing?
I would have looked up from the basin,
Curl of steam like incense,
And answered, I'm saving myself, and you too,
love.

[Alumni Notes]

THE CURSE OF THE BLUE JAYS?

From Where Are They Now? *a booklet written by Jerry Howarth, radio announcer for the Toronto Blue Jays, and distributed by Benjamin Moore Paints. The booklet, which is given out at hardware stores in Toronto, lists the current livelihood of everyone who played for the team since its inception in 1977.*

Jesse Jefferson, pitcher, *1977*

Jesse, forty-five, drives a garbage truck for his hometown of Midlothian, Virginia. He has recently been promoted to waste manager. In his new position he drives a big truck that loads and unloads garbage at grocery stores by itself, no handling necessary.

Steve Hargan, pitcher, *1977*

Steve, fifty-one, owns a pumping service for cesspools and septic tanks in Palm Springs, California.

Randy Moffitt, pitcher, *1983*

Randy, forty-five, works part-time in a dental lab in Athens, Georgia, designing partial dentures. He has had serious back problems in the past five years and has had two operations.

Victor Cruz, pitcher, *1978*

Victor, thirty-seven, had some rough times in his native Dominican Republic after leaving the Blue Jays. Victor now makes his home in New York City and is looking for work.

Tony Solaita, first base/designated hitter, *1979*

After moving to his native Samoa in 1979, Tony founded the first ever Samoan Little League program, which grew to over six hundred teams playing tournaments as far away as Hawaii. On February 10, 1990, at age forty-three, he was shot and killed on his property over a land dispute.

Dennis DeBarr, pitcher, *1977*

Dennis, forty-one, was working in construction until he suffered a severe injury when an eight-pound plank fell and crushed his right foot. At the same time, his one-hour photo shops failed. He is now trying to get back into baseball as a full-time coach.

Butch Edge, pitcher, *1979*

Butch, thirty-seven, was last known to be living in Sacramento, California.

[Fiction]

STOLEN CHILD

From The Stolen Child, *a novel by Paul Cody, to be published this month by Baskerville, in Dallas. Cody lives in Ithaca, New York.* The Stolen Child *is his first novel.*

He disappeared on a Friday afternoon in October. He was ten years old, and he may have been riding a bicycle, or he may have been walking. The day was warm, the leaves were orange and red and gold, and he was probably alone somewhere in Newton, outside Boston. He was wearing jeans and a baseball cap and sneakers, and maybe he was on Walnut Street, near Newtonville Square, and a car pulled up. A blue car, a red car, a car with out-of-state plates, and the driver rolled down the window and said, Hey, said, Hello, asked for directions, wanted to know the time. You want a lift? the driver may have asked, and Ford stopped, turned, smiled. He had freckles, straight brown hair, blue eyes.

This was a long time ago, and he might be someplace now, might be in some town or city, some state or country or continent. He'd be older, and he could have a new family, a family of his own, or maybe just a room to himself.

Or he might be dead. Probably he's dead. He could have drowned, could have been shot or strangled or stabbed or smothered, and left somewhere. In the woods, in a dumpster, at the edge of a lake. Maybe his body was found in the Utah desert, or in a motel room, off an interstate, in Missouri or Nevada or Florida. There were blinking neon lights, anemic palm trees, the whine of traffic in the distance. An insect ticking against a window.

Other things are possible, too. Everything's possible.

Ford went to live in a castle, in a country beyond a sea somewhere. He had a room at the top of a winding stair, with a bed as wide as a pond. At night there were blinking lights outside the window next to his bed, a mile or two away.

This is Ireland, he thought. This is Kenya. This is India. This is the western part of Canada.

The few people he saw never spoke. They seemed to drift and float, and they brought food to him on trays, and drew baths, and smiled at him like this was a kingdom somewhere in Mexico, or this was Heaven, and God was very tired, was sleeping, in a far high room of the castle. And he'd turn to the side and there'd be carved doors with keys in their locks, and he would be ten years old, and this started in Newtonville Square, and Mom told



"Paul's Driveway," by Lynn Saville. The photograph is part of a series by Saville that aims to document "the ambiguous hours of night" and the images created out of "darkness, rain, fog, moon, streetlights, and snow." The series was on display last month at the Seventh and Second Photo Gallery, in New York City.

him to be careful. The car paused, and the man smiled like a baseball coach, a priest, like a fourth-grade teacher. And now God was waiting, was lying awake in bed, his eyes dark and liquid, and the room was full of mist.

So there's nothing tonight. Nothing now or any night. Not in the doors or walls, not in the locks, not in the floor, the ceiling, the bars on the windows. Just breathing slow and waiting, and at ten the attendants will come through with their keys and long policeman's flashlights, and if anyone lingers in the halls or dayroom, they'll say, Okay. Let's go. It's time, they'll say, their voices as quiet and still as darkness.

The beams of light will move fast over the walls and ceiling, and voices whisper and mutter, say, No, no, no, no, and I don't move or say anything or even think to breathe. I'm quiet and patient as dust.

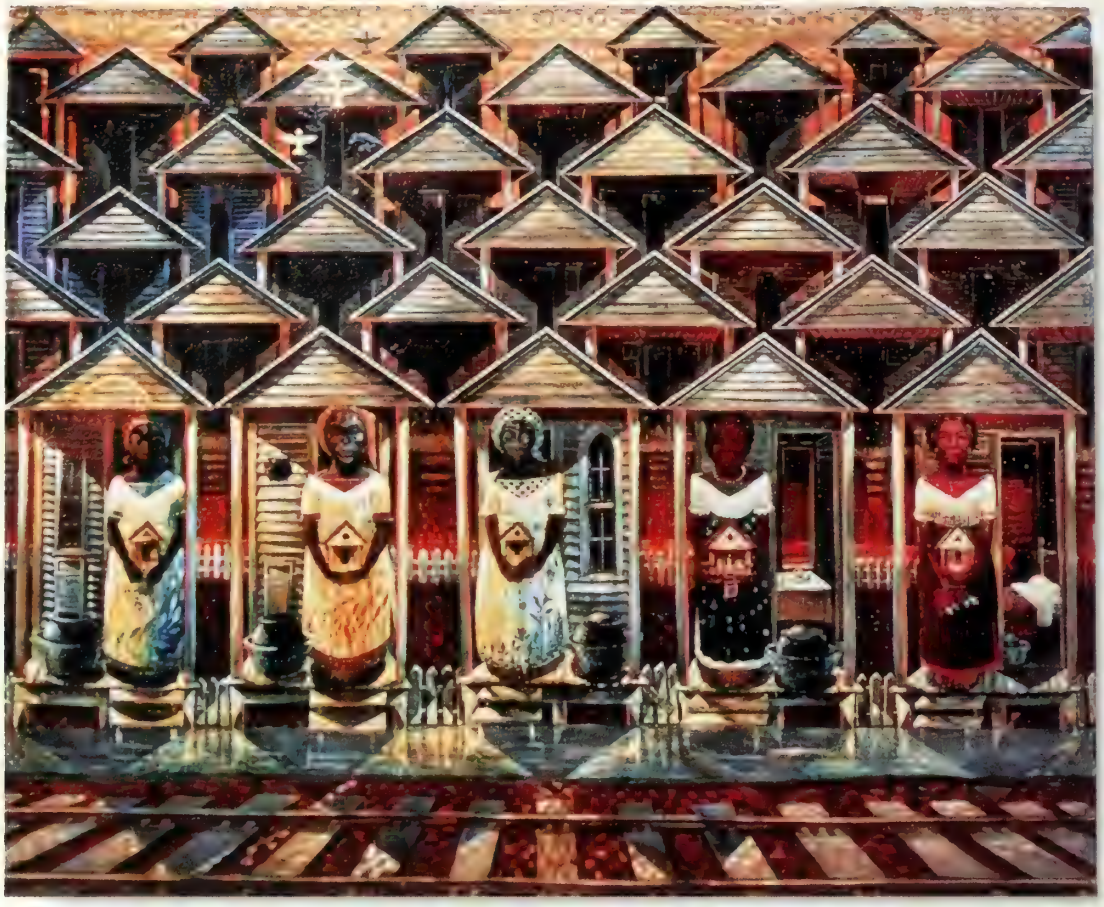
Footsteps shuffle past, slippers pad the linoleum, and the feet go quick, then slow, and the voices whisper, Sorry, okay, and, Sorry, okay, and a steel door clanks somewhere, and keys jangle like music, and more shuffling footsteps go by. They squeak. They're sneakers.

Then they'll say, Okay, it's time, and I'll shuffle along, too, and I'll nod and smile, and they won't even have to tell me to roll up the sleeve of my T-shirt. They'll touch the spot with cotton, and it's ice for a second, then the needle will be so fast I won't realize till afterward that they're done. That the chemical's inside, and spreading through me, and it could last a long time if it had to.

All set, the man in white will say, and I'll nod some more.

Then it's getting dark. The lawns outside are deep deep green, and full of shadow, and a bird clicks in a tree, goes click, click, cheep, click, and I walk slowly in the light that's getting covered with shadows outside. And there are shadows in here too. Night with its blankets of darkness and more men go past with keys, and the one with black hair says, Ellis, as I shuffle past, and I don't say anything.

The sheets are cool and have old yellow



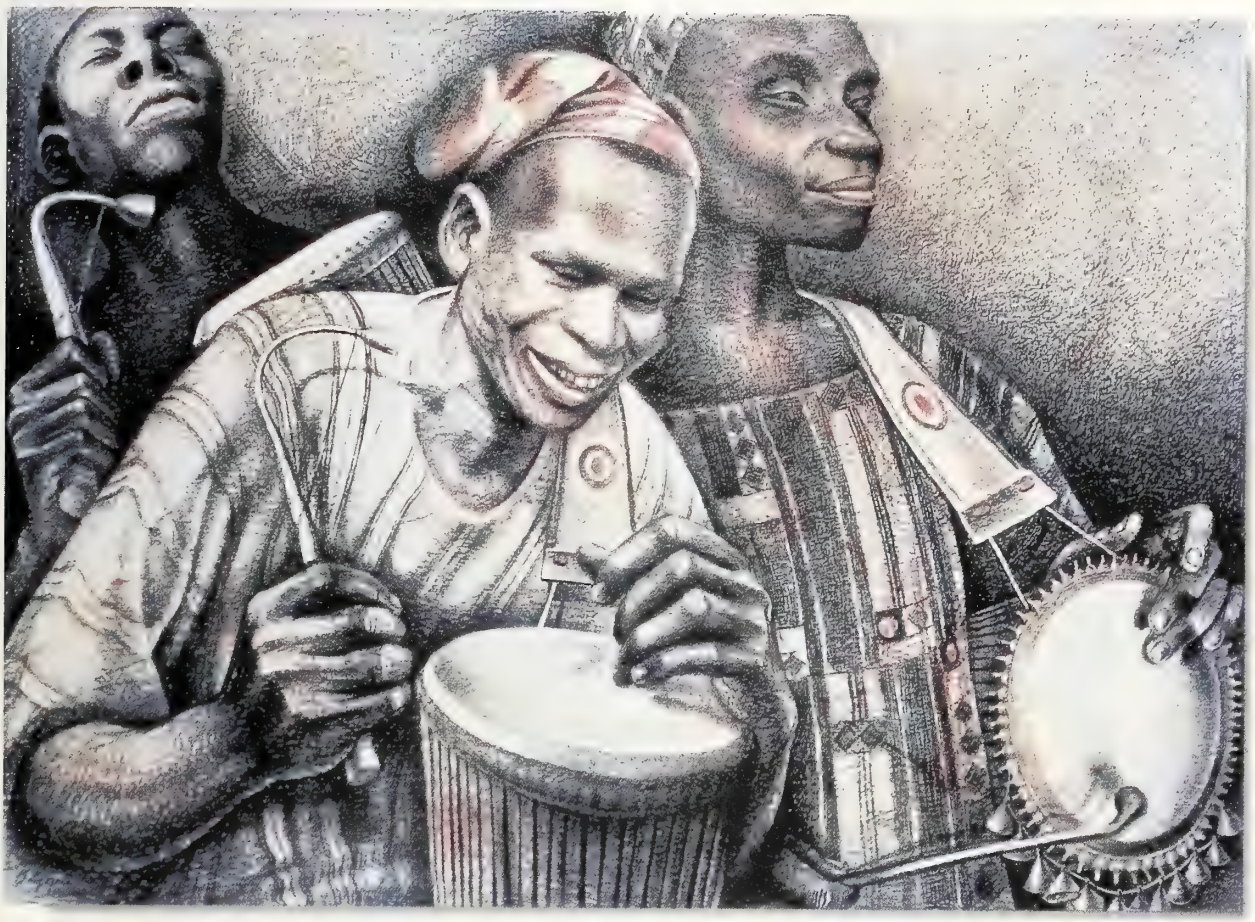
Shotguns 1983 Acrylic and oil on canvas. Private collection

Struggle and transformation.

Themes of his art.

Themes of his life.

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The Art of John Biggers: View from the Upper Room

Perhaps no one is more responsible for capturing the spirit of West Africa, and releasing it to the world. Ahead of his time because he embraced African culture before most had fully explored its richness, John Biggers was—and still is—a champion of the human spirit and its remarkable triumphs throughout the ages. Often provocative, but always honest, Biggers' work possesses an uncommon intensity of soul. Partly because of his influential rearing in the South. Partly because of his travels to West Africa. He paints what he sees. And this is a man who sees more than most. For more information, call (713) 639-7300.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX	April 2-September 3, 1995
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC	October 15, 1995-January 14, 1996
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT	May 19-September 9, 1996
Hampton University Art Museum, Hampton, VA	October 6-December 20, 1996
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA	January 24-April 20, 1997

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stains, and there's a wardrobe at the foot of the bed, with two hangers, and the red sweater they let me borrow, and a window, and outside is the lawn, and past the lawn some woods. And things in the woods. Trees, and bushes, and maybe a man squatting and watching, his eyes glittery in the dark. Waiting for hour after hour, his eyes blinking, and he's barely breathing at all.

My head is heavy on the pillow. It must weigh ten or twenty pounds. And all the wires inside. The blips, the tiny sparks, like atoms in deep space, flicking and flicking.

Footsteps in the hall. Shuffling, then the ceiling way up there, and a piece of light in a corner, a tan square pasted in place. If I wake up in an hour the square will be different, because they snuck in and moved it.

And the man's sitting in the woods out there. Quiet like a tree or leaf. His eyes shining and watching for hour after hour.

The man has a car, and he can move if he wants. Can drive all night and the next day and that night as well. Can go forty or fifty hours, and pull over once or twice at a rest stop, under trees, near overflowing trash cans. He can slump down behind the wheel and close his eyes, and feel the engine still vibrating, and the road underneath, even though everything has stopped.

The light falls on his eyelids, outside Albany, New York, or Jackson, Mississippi.

He can drift like that. His eyes closed, and the sounds of the road seem a long long way away.

Drifting like in here. My head a hundred pounds, and full of old coins that have been in the attic or something. Musty coins. Maybe they were under water.

Rick leans in with his flashlight. There's a spot on the ceiling.

Ellis, he says. Can't sleep?

My head goes from side to side.

Another half hour or hour, you let us know. We'll get you a shot.

Sleep is what happens at the end of a day. It comes up to you, quiet and soft, and you don't even know it.

I get up and the bedsprings squeak, and I sit on the side of my bed. The blanket itches.

Outside it's darker still, and the tops of trees are humps, and the sky is moonless and starless. It's maybe eleven. The window has bars on the outside, and water is dripping in a pipe. Water sloshes and slaps, and the man in the woods is somewhere.

And when they rubbed the spot on my upper arm, it was me and not someone else. And Ford became Ellis, became Ellis, became Ellis.

I knew that, and I knew about a long time ago, and what a man might have said to Ford.

How he was on his bicycle, and he was near Newtonville Square, and a car pulled up. This was Friday, and this was a long long time ago. The leaves were as bright as small suns. Orange and yellow, red like tulips.

The man rolled down the window and smiled. He said, I'm not from around here, and I'm kind of lost.

[Essay]

POETRY'S DIRTY SECRET

From "The Untold Cynicism of Poetry," by Adam Zagajewski, in Two Cities: On Exile, History, and the Imagination, *a collection of his essays translated from the Polish by Lillian Vallee and published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Zagajewski is the author of two books of poetry,* Tremor *and* Canvas. *He lives in Paris.*

The inner world, which is the absolute kingdom of poetry, is characterized by its inexpressibility. It is like air; certainly there are truths in it, tensions, differences in temperature, but its chief characteristic is absolute transparency. What then does this inner world accomplish if, in spite of its inexpressibility, it wants more than anything to express itself? It uses cunning. It pretends that it is interested, oh yes, very interested, in external reality. A great state is in decline? The inner world is ecstatic: it has a subject! Death appears on the horizon? The inner world—it thinks itself immortal—quivers with excitement. War? Terrific. Suffering? Excellent. Trees? Overblown roses? Even better. Reality? Bravo. Reality is simply indispensable; if it did not exist, one would have to invent it.

Poetry attempts to cheat reality; it pretends that it takes reality's worries seriously. It shakes its head knowingly. Oh, it says, another earthquake. Injustice again. Floods, revolutions. Once again someone has reached old age.

Poetry fears that its secret will be discovered. One day reality may notice that the heart of poetry is cold. That poetry has no heart at all, just big eyes and an excellent ear. Reality will suddenly understand that it was only a bottomless source of metaphors for poetry, and it will vanish. Poetry will remain alone in the world, mute, empty, sad, and incommunicable.



"Mamny Plays On," by Joseph Rodriguez. From Spanish Harlem, *a book of Rodriguez's photographs to be published this month by the National Museum of American Art/P.A.P.*

A nice bright boy like you.

The light moves down the hall, on the ceiling and walls, and Steve says, Ellis, and I stand up, and he puts his hand on my shoulder, on my upper arm, where the shot will go.

And Steve hardly says a word.

There are fifty states, and ten million miles of roads and houses and schools, churches, playgrounds, gas stations, and stores.

Mom said, Watch out. Be careful.

And all those faces on the sides of milk cartons, on the bulletin boards in Laundromats and supermarkets. The clean hair, the large eyes. Gone from Eugene, Oregon, and Melbourne, Florida. From Morristown, Tennessee, and Newton, Massachusetts.

Kids wearing blue sneakers, white jeans, a jersey with red stripes. Wearing a green parka, a checked shirt, boat shoes, boots. Wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap, a yellow windbreaker. With braces, a crescent scar on the left forearm, brown hair, green eyes. Weighing sixty-five pounds, eighty-three, fifty pounds. Four feet six inches tall, four feet ten inches, four one. Born in 1953, 1969, 1988.

Last seen on a playground, at a mall, on the way home from a neighbor's house.

There's been a terrible accident. We're going to your aunt's house.

Your mother had to go away. There was an emergency. She wanted you to come with me.

Shut your fucking mouth or you're dead.

I won't hurt you.

You're safe.

I'm a nightmare, he said, his voice a slap.

She'll call in a few weeks.

And on the floor in the back of the car the carpet smelled of beer and urine and gasoline, and he drove forever and ever. It was light, then dark, then light again. In Ohio, or Missouri, or Arizona. There was cactus out the window. Cows, hills and farms, mountains, desert.

There was a motel room where the water dripped in the shower, and the man snored when he slept, and neon blinked Vacancy Vacancy Vacancy all through the night.

My head is a thousand pounds, and my body is light.

Mom said, Honey, and she rubbed the towel in my hair. She said at night the world was big like the sky. She said she'd take me places. When she was a girl, her father and mother took her to a lake one summer, and there were loons and deer, raccoons and bluebirds.

She sat on the edge of the bed and said, Having you was the happiest thing in the world. She smelled like lilac, and it was October, and I was not dreaming. ■



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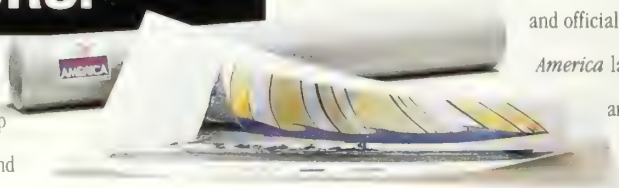
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IN DEFENSE OF PREJUDICE

Why incendiary speech must be protected

By Jonathan Rauch

The war on prejudice is now, in all likelihood, the most uncontroversial social movement in America. Opposition to "hate speech," formerly identified with the liberal left, has become a bipartisan piety. In the past year, groups and factions that agree on nothing else have agreed that the public expression of any and all prejudices must be forbidden. On the left, protesters and editorialists have insisted that Francis L. Lawrence resign as president of Rutgers University for describing blacks as "a disadvantaged population that doesn't have that genetic, hereditary background to have a higher average." On the other side of the ideological divide, Ralph Reed, the executive director of the Christian Coalition, responded to criticism of the religious right by calling a press conference to denounce a supposed outbreak of "name-calling, scapegoating, and religious bigotry." Craig Rogers, an evangelical Christian student at California State University, recently filed a $2.5 million sexual-harassment suit against a lesbian professor of psychology, claiming that anti-male bias in one of her lectures violated campus rules and left him feeling "raped and trapped."

In universities and on Capitol Hill, in workplaces and newsrooms, authorities are declaring that there is no place for racism, sexism, homophobia, Christian-bashing, and other forms of prejudice in public debate or even in private thought. "Only when racism and other forms of prejudice are expunged," say the crusaders for sweetness and light, "can minorities be safe and society be fair." So sweet, this dream of a world without prejudice. But the very last thing society should do is seek to utterly eradicate racism and other forms of prejudice.

I suppose I should say, in the customary I-hope-I-don't-sound-too-defensive tone, that I am not a racist and that this is not an article favoring racism or any other particular prejudice. It is an article favoring intellectual pluralism, which permits the expression of various forms of bigotry

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IF YOU WANT PLURALISM, THEN YOU GET RACISM AND SEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA AND TRIBALISM—AND THAT IS JUST FOR A START

and always will. Although we like to hope that a time will come when no one will believe that people come in types and that each type belongs with its own kind, I doubt such a day will ever arrive. By all indications, *Homo sapiens* is a tribal species for whom "us versus them" comes naturally and must be continually pushed back. Where there is genuine freedom of expression, there will be racist expression. There will also be people who believe that homosexuals are sick or threaten children or—especially among teenagers—are rightful targets of manly savagery. Homosexuality will always be incomprehensible to most people, and what is incomprehensible is feared. As for anti-Semitism, it appears to be a hardier virus than influenza. If you want pluralism, then you get racism and sexism and homophobia, and communism and fascism and xenophobia and tribalism, and that is just for a start. If you want to believe in intellectual freedom and the progress of knowledge and the advancement of science and all those other good things, then you must swallow hard and accept this: for as thickheaded and wayward an animal as us, the realistic question is how to make the best of prejudice, not how to eradicate it.

Indeed, "eradicating prejudice" is so vague a proposition as to be meaningless. Distinguishing prejudice reliably and nonpolitically from non-prejudice, or even defining it crisply, is quite hopeless. We all feel we know prejudice when we see it. But do we? At the University of Michigan, a student said in a classroom discussion that he considered homosexuality a disease treatable with therapy. He was summoned to a formal disciplinary hearing for violating the school's policy against speech that "victimizes" people based on "sexual orientation." Now, the evidence is abundant that this particular hypothesis is wrong, and any American homosexual can attest to the harm that the student's hypothesis has inflicted on many real people. But was it a statement of prejudice or of misguided belief? Hate speech or hypothesis? Many Americans who do not regard themselves as bigots or haters believe that homosexuality is a treatable disease. They may be wrong, but are they all bigots? I am unwilling to say so, and if you are willing, beware. The line between a prejudiced belief and a merely controversial one is elusive, and the harder you look the more elusive it becomes. "God hates homosexuals" is a statement of fact, not of bias, to those who believe it; "American criminals are disproportionately black" is a statement of bias, not of fact, to those who disbelieve it.

Who is right? You may decide, and so may others, and there is no need to agree. That is the great innovation of intellectual pluralism (which is to say, of post-Enlightenment science, broadly defined). We cannot know in advance or for sure which belief is prejudice and which is truth, but to advance knowledge we don't need to know. The genius of intellectual pluralism lies not in doing away with prejudices and dogmas but in channeling them—making them socially productive by pitting prejudice against prejudice and dogma against dogma, exposing all to withering public criticism. What survives at the end of the day is our base of knowledge.

What they told us in high school about this process is very largely a lie. The Enlightenment tradition taught us that science is orderly, antiseptic, rational, the province of detached experimenters and high-minded logicians. In the popular view, science stands for reason against prejudice, open-mindedness against dogma, calm consideration against passionate attachment—all personified by pop-science icons like the magisterially deductive Sherlock Holmes, the coolly analytic Mr. Spock, the genially authoritative Mr. Science (from our junior-high science films). Yet one of science's dirty secrets is that although science as a whole is as unbiased as anything human can be, scientists are just as biased as anyone else, sometimes more so. "One of the strengths of science," writes the philosopher of science David L. Hull, "is that it does not require that scientists be unbiased, only that different scientists have dif-

ferent biases." Another dirty secret is that, no less than the rest of us, scientists can be dogmatic and pigheaded. "Although this pigheadedness often damages the careers of individual scientists," says Hull, "it is beneficial for the manifest goal of science," which relies on people to invest years in their ideas and defend them passionately. And the dirtiest secret of all, if you believe in the antiseptic popular view of science, is that this most ostensibly rational of enterprises depends on the most irrational of motives—ambition, narcissism, animus, even revenge. "Scientists acknowledge that among their motivations are natural curiosity, the love of truth, and the desire to help humanity, but other inducements exist as well, and one of them is to 'get that son of a bitch,'" says Hull. "Time and again, scientists whom I interviewed described the powerful spur that 'showing that son of a bitch' supplied to their own research."

Many people, I think, are bewildered by this unvarnished and all too human view of science. They believe that for a system to be unprejudiced, the people in it must also be unprejudiced. In fact, the opposite is true. Far from eradicating ugly or stupid ideas and coarse or unpleasant motives, intellectual pluralism relies upon them to excite intellectual passion and redouble scientific effort. I know of no modern idea more ugly and stupid than that the Holocaust never happened, nor any idea more viciously motivated. Yet the deniers' claims that the Auschwitz gas chambers could not have worked led to closer study and, in 1993, research showing, at last, how they actually did work. Thanks to prejudice and stupidity, another opening for doubt has been shut.

An enlightened and efficient intellectual regime lets a million prejudices bloom, including many that you or I may regard as hateful or grotesque. It avoids any attempt to stamp out prejudice, because stamping out prejudice really means forcing everyone to share the same prejudice, namely that of whoever is in authority. The great American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce wrote in 1877: "When complete agreement could not otherwise be reached, a general massacre of all who have not thought in a certain way has proved a very effective means of settling opinion in a country." In speaking of "settling opinion," Peirce was writing about one of the two or three most fundamental problems that any human society must confront and solve. For most societies down through the centuries, this problem was dealt with in the manner he described: errors were identified by the authorities—priests, politburos, dictators—or by mass opinion, and then the error-makers were eliminated along with their putative mistakes. "Let all men who reject the established belief be terrified into silence," wrote Peirce, describing this system. "This method has, from the earliest times, been one of the chief means of upholding correct theological and political doctrines."

Intellectual pluralism substitutes a radically different doctrine: we kill our mistakes rather than each other. Here I draw on another great philosopher, the late Karl Popper, who pointed out that the critical method of science "consists in letting our hypotheses die in our stead." Those who are in error are not (or are not supposed to be) banished or excommunicated or forced to sign a renunciation or required to submit to "rehabilitation" or sent for psychological counseling. It is the error we punish, not the errant. By letting people make errors—even mischievous, spiteful errors (as, for instance, Galileo's insistence on Copernicanism was taken to be in 1633)—pluralism creates room to challenge orthodoxy, think imaginatively, experiment boldly. Brilliance and bigotry are empowered in the same stroke.

Pluralism is the principle that protects and makes a place in human company for that loneliest and most vulnerable of all minorities, the minority who is hounded and despised among blacks and whites, gays and

WITHIN INTELLECTUAL PLURALISM IS THE DOCTRINE THAT WE KILL OUR MISTAKES RATHER THAN EACH OTHER



Illustrations by Henrik Drescher

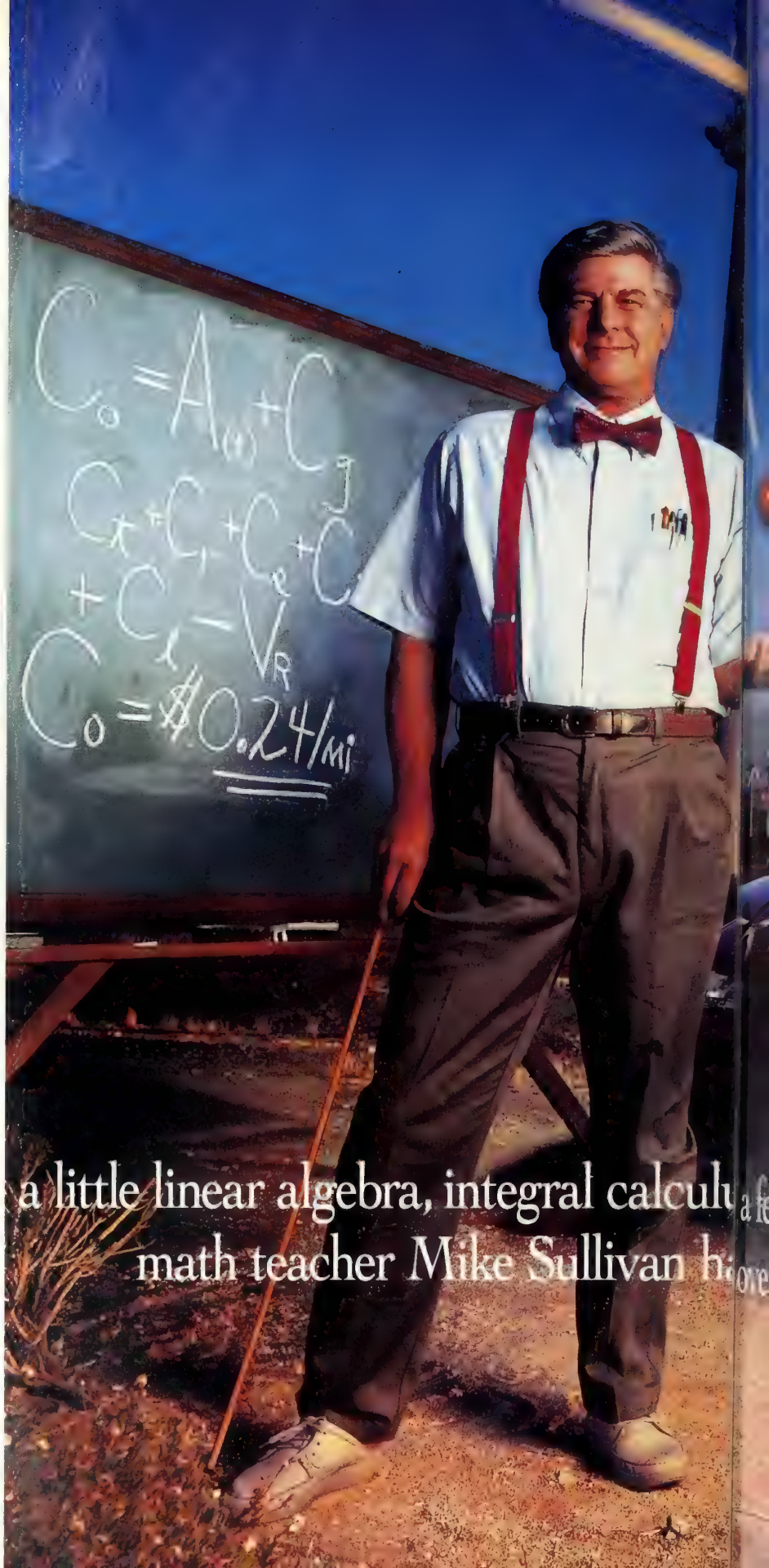
Mike Sullivan uses fluorescent lighting in his house—to conserve electricity. He uses a drip irrigation system in his yard—to conserve water. And he bought his Saturn wagon, well, to conserve money.

This is not to say Mike is a contemporary tightwad by any means. He's a seventh grade math teacher—who, understandably, views life a little like a latter-day Pythagoras.

So we weren't surprised when we asked Mike about his Saturn and his face lit up as he described how little a Saturn costs him to own by his own linear calculations.

Basically, Mike added his buying cost to the cost of tires, repairs, maintenance, insurance and license for five years, subtracted the resale value, then divided by 60,000 miles and came out with what it would typically cost him to own a Saturn. Or, about twenty-four cents a mile.

Of course, it's not just the Saturn Mike calculates down to the penny. He figures his Saturn costs



By using a little linear algebra, integral calculu
math teacher Mike Sullivan hi

him a lot less to operate than the pickup truck he owns...and, well, just a bit more than his lawnmower.

Now granted, the Saturn's not much of a mulcher, but Mike says it's a whole lot more fun.

Mike bought his Saturn at Saturn of Bakersfield from David Lopez, who hopes no one asks him to explain this.

a few polynomial equations
overed the joys of owning a Saturn.

You don't really have to be Sir Isaac Newton—or even a Mike Sullivan—to discover one of the little-known joys of owning a Saturn. Something called The 1994 Complete Car Cost Guide by IntelliChoice®, Inc. does a lot of the noodle



work for you. They calculate all the costs of owning a car for five years. (Of course, ownership costs will vary from car to car.) When they add it all up, Saturns that are rated have one of the lowest ownership costs in their class. But, if you feel like you missed all the "fun," you can always integrate the functions over time and hunker down with a few polynomial equations.

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IN THE NAME OF MINORITIES, THE NEW PURISTS MAKE WAR NOT ON ERRORS BUT ON ERROR ITSELF



straights, who is suspect or criminal among every tribe and in every nation of the world, and yet on whom progress depends: the dissident. I am not saying that dissent is always or even usually enlightened. Most of the time it is foolish and self-serving. No dissident has the right to be taken seriously, and the fact that Aryan Nation racists or Nation of Islam anti-Semites are unorthodox does not entitle them to respect. But what goes around comes around. As a supporter of gay marriage, for example, I reject the majority's view of family, and as a Jew I reject its view of God. I try to be civil, but the fact is that most Americans regard my views on marriage as a reckless assault on the most fundamental of all institutions, and many people are more than a little discomfited by the statement "Jesus Christ was no more divine than anybody else" (which is why so few people ever say it). Trap the racists and anti-Semites, and you lay a trap for me too. Hunt for them with eradication in your mind, and you have brought dissent itself within your sights.

The new crusade against prejudice waves aside such warnings. Like earlier crusades against antisocial ideas, the mission is fueled by good (if cocksure) intentions and a genuine sense of urgency. Some kinds of error are held to be intolerable, like pollutants that even in small traces poison the water for a whole town. Some errors are so pernicious as to damage real people's lives, so wrongheaded that no person of right mind or goodwill could support them. Like their forebears of other stripe—the Church in its campaigns against heretics, the McCarthyites in their campaigns against Communists—the modern anti-racist and anti-sexist and anti-homophobic campaigners are totalists, demanding not that misguided ideas and ugly expressions be corrected or criticized but that they be eradicated. They make war not on errors but on error, and like other totalists they act in the name of public safety—the safety, especially, of minorities.

The sweeping implications of this challenge to pluralism are not, I think, well enough understood by the public at large. Indeed, the new brand of totalism has yet even to be properly named. "Multiculturalism," for instance, is much too broad. "Political correctness" comes closer but is too trendy and snide. For lack of anything else, I will call the new anti-pluralism "purism," since its major tenet is that society cannot be just until the last traces of invidious prejudice have been scrubbed away. Whatever you call it, the purists' way of seeing things has spread through American intellectual life with remarkable speed, so much so that many people will blink at you uncomprehendingly or even call you a racist (or sexist or homophobe, etc.) if you suggest that expressions of racism should be tolerated or that prejudice has its part to play.

The new purism sets out, to begin with, on a campaign against words, for words are the currency of prejudice, and if prejudice is hurtful then so must be prejudiced words. "We are not safe when these violent words are among us," wrote Mari Matsuda, then a UCLA law professor. Here one imagines gangs of racist words swinging chains and smashing heads in back alleys. To suppress bigoted language seems, at first blush, reasonable, but it quickly leads to a curious result. A peculiar kind of verbal shamanism takes root, as though certain expressions, like curses or magical incantations, carry in themselves the power to hurt or heal—as though words were bigoted rather than people. "Context is everything," people have always said. The use of the word "nigger" in *Huckleberry Finn* does not make the book an "act" of hate speech—or does it? In the new view, this is no longer so clear. The very utterance of the word "nigger" (at least by a non-black) is a racist act. When a *Sacramento Bee* cartoonist put the word "nigger" mockingly in the

mouth of a white supremacist, there were howls of protest and 1,400 canceled subscriptions and an editorial apology, even though the word was plainly being invoked against racists, not against blacks.

Faced with escalating demands of verbal absolutism, newspapers issue lists of forbidden words. The expressions "gyp" (derived from "Gypsy") and "Dutch treat" were among the dozens of terms stricken as "offensive" in a much-ridiculed (and later withdrawn) *Los Angeles Times* speech code. The University of Missouri journalism school issued a *Dictionary of Cautionary Words and Phrases*, which included "*Buxom:* Offensive reference to a woman's chest. Do not use. See 'Woman.' *Codger:* Offensive reference to a senior citizen."

As was bound to happen, purists soon discovered that chasing around after words like "gyp" or "buxom" hardly goes to the roots of the problem. As long as they remain bigoted, bigots will simply find other words. If they can't call you a kike then they will say Jewboy, Judas, or Hebe, and when all those are banned they will press words like "oven" and "lampshade" into their service. The vocabulary of hate is potentially as rich as your dictionary, and all you do by banning language used by cretins is to let them decide what the rest of us may say. The problem, some purists have concluded, must therefore go much deeper than laws: it must go to the deeper level of ideas. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and the rest must be built into the very structure of American society and American patterns of thought, so pervasive yet so insidious that, like water to a fish, they are both omnipresent and unseen. The mere existence of prejudice constructs a society whose very nature is prejudiced.

This line of thinking was pioneered by feminists, who argued that pornography, more than just being expressive, is an act by which men construct an oppressive society. Racial activists quickly picked up the argument. Racist expressions are themselves acts of oppression, they said. "All racist speech constructs the social reality that constrains the liberty of nonwhites because of their race," wrote Charles R. Lawrence III, then a law professor at Stanford. From the purist point of view, a society with even one racist is a racist society, because the idea itself threatens and demeans its targets. They cannot feel wholly safe or wholly welcome as long as racism is present. Pluralism says: There will always be some racists. Marginalize them, ignore them, exploit them, ridicule them, take pains to make their policies illegal, but otherwise leave them alone. Purists say: That's not enough. Society cannot be just until these pervasive and oppressive ideas are searched out and eradicated.

And so what is now under way is a growing drive to eliminate prejudice from every corner of society. I doubt that many people have noticed how far-reaching this anti-pluralist movement is becoming.

In universities: Dozens of universities have adopted codes proscribing speech or other expression that (this is from Stanford's policy, which is more or less representative) "is intended to insult or stigmatize an individual or a small number of individuals on the basis of their sex, race, color, handicap, religion, sexual orientation or national and ethnic origin." Some codes punish only persistent harassment of a targeted individual, but many, following the purist doctrine that even one racist is too many, go much further. At Penn, an administrator declared: "We at the University of Pennsylvania have guaranteed students and the community that they can live in a community free of sexism, racism, and homophobia." Here is the purism that gives "political correctness" its distinctive combination of puffy high-mindedness and authoritarian zeal.

In school curricula: "More fundamental than eliminating racial segregation has to be the removal of racist thinking, assumptions, symbols, and materials in the curriculum," writes theorist Molefi Kete Asante. In practice, the effort to "remove racist thinking" goes well beyond striking egregious references from textbooks. In many cases it becomes a kind of mental engineering in which students are encouraged to see prejudice

ALL YOU DO BY BANNING LANGUAGE USED BY CRETINS IS TO LET THEM DECIDE WHAT THE REST OF US MAY SAY

EVERY JOKE, GEORGE ORWELL OBSERVED, IS A TINY REVOLUTION. THE PURISTS HAVE GIVEN US JOKE POLICE

everywhere; it includes teaching identity politics as an antidote to internalized racism; it rejects mainstream science as "white male" thinking; and it tampers with history, installing such dubious notions as that the ancient Greeks stole their culture from Africa or that an ancient carving of a bird is an example of "African experimental aeronautics."

In criminal law: Consider two crimes. In each, I am beaten brutally; in each, my jaw is smashed and my skull is split in just the same way. However, in the first crime my assailant calls me an "asshole"; in the second he calls me a "queer." In most states, in many localities, and, as of September 1994, in federal cases, these two crimes are treated differently: the crime motivated by bias—or deemed to be so motivated by prosecutors and juries—gets a stiffer punishment. "Longer prison terms for bigots," shrilled Brooklyn Democratic Congressman Charles Schumer, who introduced the federal hate-crimes legislation, and those are what the law now provides. Evidence that the assailant holds prejudiced beliefs, even if he doesn't actually express them while committing an offense, can serve to elevate the crime. Defendants in hate-crimes cases may be grilled on how many black friends they have and whether they have told racist jokes. To increase a prison sentence only because of the defendant's "prejudice" (as gauged by prosecutor and jury) is, of course, to try minds and punish beliefs. Purists say, Well, they are dangerous minds and poisonous beliefs.

In the workplace: Though government cannot constitutionally suppress bigotry directly, it is now busy doing so indirectly by requiring employers to eliminate prejudice. Since the early 1980s, courts and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have moved to bar workplace speech deemed to create a hostile or abusive working environment for minorities. The law, held a federal court in 1988, "does require that an employer take prompt action to prevent . . . bigots from expressing their opinions in a way that abuses or offends their co-workers," so as to achieve "the goal of eliminating prejudices and biases from our society." So it was, as UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh notes, that the EEOC charged that a manufacturer's ads using admittedly accurate depictions of samurai, kabuki, and sumo were "racist" and "offensive to people of Japanese origin"; that a Pennsylvania court found that an employer's printing Bible verses on paychecks was religious harassment of Jewish employees; that an employer had to desist using gender-based job titles like "foreman" and "draftsman" after a female employee sued.

On and on the campaign goes, darting from one outbreak of prejudice to another like a cat chasing flies. In the American Bar Association, activists demand that lawyers who express "bias or prejudice" be penalized. In the Education Department, the civil-rights office presses for a ban on computer bulletin board comments that "show hostility toward a person or group based on sex, race or color, including slurs, negative stereotypes, jokes or pranks." In its security checks for government jobs, the FBI takes to asking whether applicants are "free of biases against any class of citizens," whether, for instance, they have told racist jokes or indicated other "prejudices." Joke police! George Orwell, grasping the close relationship of jokes to dissent, said that every joke is a tiny revolution. The purists will have no such rebellions.

The purist campaign reaches, in the end, into the mind itself. In a lecture at the University of New Hampshire, a professor compared writing to sex ("You and the subject become one"); he was suspended and required to apologize, but what was most insidious was the order to undergo university-approved counseling to have his mind straightened out. At the University of Pennsylvania, a law lecturer said, "We have ex-slaves here who should know about the Thirteenth Amendment"; he was banished from campus for a year and required to make a public apology, and he, too, was compelled to attend a "sensitivity and racial awareness" session. Mandatory re-education of alleged bigots is the natural consequence of intellectual purism. Prejudice must be eliminated!

Ah, but the task of scouring minds clean is Augean. "Nobody escapes," said a Rutgers University report on campus prejudice. Bias and prejudice, it found, cross every conceivable line, from sex to race to politics: "No matter who you are, no matter what the color of your skin, no matter what your gender or sexual orientation, no matter what you believe, no matter how you behave, there is somebody out there who doesn't like people of your kind." Charles Lawrence writes: "Racism is ubiquitous. We are all racists." If he means that most of us think racist thoughts of some sort at one time or another, he is right. If we are going to "eliminate prejudices and biases from our society," then the work of the prejudice police is unending. They are doomed to hunt and hunt and hunt, scour and scour and scour.

What is especially dismaying is that the purists pursue prejudice in the name of protecting minorities. In order to protect people like me (homosexual), they must pursue people like me (dissident). In order to bolster minority self-esteem, they suppress minority opinion. There are, of course, all kinds of practical and legal problems with the purists' campaign: the incursions against the First Amendment; the inevitable abuses by prosecutors and activists who define as "hateful" or "violent" whatever speech they dislike or can score points off of; the lack of any evidence that repressing prejudice eliminates rather than inflames it. But minorities, of all people, ought to remember that by definition we cannot prevail by numbers, and we generally cannot prevail by force. Against the power of ignorant mass opinion and group prejudice and superstition, we have only our voices. If you doubt that minorities' voices are powerful weapons, think of the lengths to which Southern officials went to silence the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (recall that the city commissioner of Montgomery, Alabama, won a $500,000 libel suit, later overturned in *New York Times* v. *Sullivan* [1964], regarding an advertisement in the *Times* placed by civil-rights leaders who denounced the Montgomery police). Think of how much gay people have improved their lot over twenty-five years simply by refusing to remain silent. Recall the Michigan student who was prosecuted for saying that homosexuality is a treatable disease, and notice that he was black. Under that Michigan speech code, more than twenty blacks were charged with racist speech, while no instance of racist speech by whites was punished. In Florida, the hate-speech law was invoked against a black man who called a policeman a "white cracker"; not so surprisingly, in the first hate-crimes case to reach the Supreme Court, the victim was white and the defendant black.

In the escalating war against "prejudice," the right is already learning to play by the rules that were pioneered by the purist activists of the left. Last year leading Democrats, including the President, criticized the Republican Party for being increasingly in the thrall of the Christian right. Some of the rhetoric was harsh ("fire-breathing Christian radical right"), but it wasn't vicious or even clearly wrong. Never mind: when Democratic Representative Vic Fazio said Republicans were "being forced to the fringes by the aggressive political tactics of the religious right," the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Haley Barbour, said, "Christian-bashing" was "the left's preferred form of religious bigotry." Bigotry! Prejudice! "Christians active in politics are now on the receiving end of an extraordinary campaign of bias and prejudice," said the conservative leader William J. Bennett. One discerns, here, where the new purism leads. Eventually, any criticism of any group will be "prejudice."

Here is the ultimate irony of the new purism: words, which pluralists hope can be substituted for violence, are redefined by purists *as* violence.

WHAT IS ESPECIALLY DISMAYING IS THAT THE PURISTS PURSUE PREJUDICE IN THE NAME OF PROTECTING MINORITIES



IN A WORLD RIFE WITH VIOLENCE, EVERY COP OR PROSECUTOR CHASING WORDS IS ONE FEWER CHASING CRIMINALS

"The experience of being called 'nigger,' 'spic,' 'Jap,' or 'kike' is like receiving a slap in the face," Charles Lawrence wrote in 1990. "Psychic injury is no less an injury than being struck in the face, and it often is far more severe." This kind of talk is commonplace today. Epithets, insults, often even polite expressions of what's taken to be prejudice are called by purists "assaultive speech," "words that wound," "verbal violence." "To me, racial epithets are not speech," one University of Michigan law professor said. "They are bullets." In her speech accepting the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature in Stockholm, Sweden, the author Toni Morrison said this: "Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence."

It is not violence. I am thinking back to a moment on the subway in Washington, a little thing. I was riding home late one night and a squad of noisy kids, maybe seventeen or eighteen years old, noisily piled into the car. They yelled across the car and a girl said, "Where do we get off?"

A boy said, "Farragut North."

The girl: "*Faggot* North!"

The boy: "Yeah! Faggot North!"

General hilarity.

First, before the intellect resumes control, there is a moment of fear, an animal moment. Who are they? How many of them? How dangerous? Where is the way out? All of these things are noted preverbally and assessed by the gut. Then the brain begins an assessment: they are sober, this is probably too public a place for them to do it, there are more girls than boys, they were just talking, it is probably nothing.

They didn't notice me and there was no incident. The teenage babble flowed on, leaving me to think. I became interested in my own reaction: the jump of fear out of nowhere like an alert animal, the sense for a brief time that one is naked and alone and should hide or run away. For a time, one ceases to be a human being and becomes instead a faggot.

The fear engendered by these words is real. The remedy is as clear and as imperfect as ever: protect citizens against violence. This, I grant, is something that American society has never done very well and now does quite poorly. It is no solution to define words as violence or prejudice as oppression, and then by cracking down on words or thoughts pretend that we are doing something about violence and oppression. No doubt it is easier to pass a speech code or hate-crimes law and proclaim the streets safer than actually to make the streets safer, but the one must never be confused with the other. Every cop or prosecutor chasing words is one fewer chasing criminals. In a world rife with real violence and oppression, full of Rwandas and Bosnias and eleven-year-olds spraying bullets at children in Chicago and in turn being executed by gang lords, it is odious of Toni Morrison to say that words are violence.

Indeed, equating "verbal violence" with physical violence is a treacherous, mischievous business. Not long ago a writer was charged with viciously and gratuitously wounding the feelings and dignity of millions of people. He was charged, in effect, with exhibiting flagrant prejudice against Muslims and outrageously slandering their beliefs. "What is freedom of expression?" mused Salman Rushdie a year after the ayatollahs sentenced him to death and put a price on his head. "Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist." I can think of nothing sadder than that minority activists, in their haste to make the world better, should be the ones to forget the lesson of Rushdie's plight: for minorities, pluralism, not purism, is the answer. The campaigns to eradicate prejudice—all of them, the speech codes and workplace restrictions and mandatory therapy for accused bigots and all the rest—should stop, now. The whole objective of eradicating prejudice, as opposed to correcting and criticizing it, should be repudiated as a fool's errand. Salman Rushdie is right, Toni Morrison wrong, and minorities belong at his side, not hers. ■

AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF OPPRESSION

A government-funded agency pretends to export democracy

By David Samuels

Beneath the starry ceiling of the grand ballroom at the Esplanade Hotel, one of the finest hotels in Zagreb, Croatia, and indeed in all of Eastern Europe, the atmosphere thickens by the moment with the hormonal mix of dread and anticipation typical of the first half hour of a high school dance. Here together, milling around in front of the long banquet tables, are those who may give and those who are blessed to receive.

The best way to tell them apart is by their shoes. Planted firmly on the dark blue carpet is a dizzying variety of soft brown loafers, ornate wing tips, sober banker's patent-leather pumps, black leather flats, leather boots, and stiletto heels—representative of a universe of polish and comfort and infinite choices. They belong to representatives of the largely American aid organizations—the Congressional Human Rights Foundation, the Balkans Peace Project, the Agency for International Development, the United States Information Agency—and are easy to spot in the muddy sea of suede boots and dull black loafers belonging to the independent editors, union leaders, and civic organizers of what is being referred to here as "the former Yugoslavia." Standing, then seated, the Balkan reformers cross and uncross their legs and dig their heels into the carpet with the stubborn pride of poor relations who must suffer the table talk of a very rich, loquacious uncle. Their faces are bright with the mixture of pain and expectation peculiar to such occasions: after the last course is served and the plates are cleared from the table, they hope, the American uncle will sigh, reach for his pen, and tear off a check for some considerable sum, the magnificence of which will redeem the humiliation of the asking.

This particular form of pleading, which the Eastern Europeans engage in, they estimate, an average of once a month, is the result of the recent American enthusiasm for aiding nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, as part of a global effort to promote the growth of what is called "civil society" in Eastern Europe. As one might guess, the availability of dollars for NGOs is leading to their proliferation. A participant from Kosovo jokes that he represents "the largest NGO here," by which he means that Kosovo does not have a legally constituted government. The Hungarian participant estimates that there are thirty-six thousand NGOs in her country. An Albanian offers a rapturous hymn to "the reality, the phenomenon, the experience, of NGOs" in a gentle reference to what a Slovenian has called, with a rather obvious lack of tact, the American practice of "financing projects in a rather random way, on the basis of personal relationships and friendships," a description that, judging by the scowls on the faces of the prospective donors, has done little to further his claims on their purses.

Welcoming the sixty-odd Bosnian, Serbian, Slovene, Albanian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Croatian supplicants and close to thirty American and European NGO donors to the

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conference, whose stated aim is "Strengthening Democracy," is the man on whose generous tab a number of them are spending the weekend, in comfortable rooms with MTV, CNN, mini bars, and a lavish buffet in the Esplanade dining hall: the American uncle himself—Carl Gershman, the president of the National Endowment for Democracy. As Gershman leans in toward the microphone, the tension covers the room like a thick, wet fog. Many of the Eastern Europeans have paid their own way here, leaving behind the fragile work of editing newspapers and radio broadcasts, educating citizens, and organizing unions and grass-roots campaigns, which they carry on beneath the increasingly hostile eyes of their governments. It is important that the conference have concrete results. What is the National Endowment for Democracy? they wonder. How much money will it give? In the gilt-edged mirrors behind Gershman's head is reflected the enormous jeweled scarab, with its Byzantine reds and blues, that sits in the center of the ballroom ceiling, a woman's gold brooch blown up to several thousand times its original size.

THE BROAD, FRIENDLY SMILES, THE GLOBAL VISIONS OF BUILDING DEMOCRACY—IT ALL ADDS UP TO NO PRINTING PRESSES

The microphone buzzes, but the Eastern Europeans are too deep in their imaginings to flinch. "The National Endowment for Democracy is an independent, nongovernmental foundation which receives a grant from the Congress every year for the purpose of strengthening democracy around the world," Gershman begins. He is a tall, thin man with the look of a modern-day Calvinist who has given up the corruptions of the flesh for a pure diet of universalist ideas. "We have a journal in which we publish essays and articles on democracy, and we organize research conferences on democracy," Gershman explains. "We are compiling a database which will soon be available over the Internet. We will hold our fifth world conference on democracy in Washington on May 1. We do work in ninety-two countries around the world," he continues, "in China, Uzbekistan, and, yes, the countries in this region."

At the mention of the ninety-two countries, you can see the eyes of the former Yugoslavs narrow with the effort of mental arithmetic, a calculus whose result can be seen a few seconds later in a universal slump of the shoulders. This slump deepens several minutes later with the presentation by the Endowment's shrewd and genial program officer for Central Europe, Paul McCarthy. "A good chunk of our money goes to four U.S.-based organizations," says McCarthy, with the air of a teacher explaining some unpleasant fact of nature to his wondering pupils, like the way the female praying mantis bites off the head of the male when they make babies, "the Free Trade Union Institute, which you have heard from, the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, the Center for International Private Enterprise. The rest of the money . . ."

Among the more experienced of the participants, the change in manner is immediately evident. They have stopped taking notes. The ninety-two countries, the broad, friendly smiles, the global visions of building democracy—you can see them adding it all up to conclude that there will be no computers, no printing presses, no radio transmitters, no money for paper, no hands-on assistance of the kind (the participants are quick to inform you) given to them by the representatives of George Soros, the American financier.

Like any rich man who gives away some large portion of his estate without any immediate motive, George Soros has attained among the Eastern European participants the unquestioned authority of a god. The absence of Soros Foundation representatives at this conference is the subject of incessant conspiratorial conversations over cigarettes and coffee in the Esplanade lounge, where black-bearded Montenegrin men, the stars of the conference—all well over six feet tall and carrying themselves with the atavistic air of having stepped out of some faded nineteenth-century engraving of Balkan mountain bandits—raise silver-headed walking sticks at hawkish Macedonian women. There is a plot to undermine George Soros financed by the government of Greece, which opposes the work of Soros in Macedonia. The Greek government is responsible for the recent article attacking Soros, an article filled with lies and provocations, by Connie Bruck in *The New Yorker* magazine. They shake their heads. Don't the Americans understand that it is only Soros who helps us? The editor of *The New Yorker*, someone explains, is a Greek with ties to the secret police. No, no, someone objects, it is her husband, an Englishman, who has ties to the army.

Objections to these and other amazing ideas are met with the gentlest of stares and only the slightest discernible rolling of eyes. Americans are, after all, a very young people. Are we not aware that the Serbs and the Croats will soon go to war? And that, when they do, surrounding countries with claims to the region—the Albanians and the Greeks, the Russians, with their Slavic ties to the Serbs, the Muslim Turks, who once ruled Bosnia, the Italians,

who colonized large areas of the Dalmatian coast; and even the Austrians, who ruled much of the region, have large investments in Croatia, and fear any further influx of Balkan refugees—will all be drawn in? Why all this talk about democracy?

Why indeed? Unlike most of the Balkan conferees at the Esplanade Hotel, I knew something about the origins of the American project for exporting democracy. Sitting in his suit office atop a tower in downtown Miami the previous fall, I had watched Dante Fascell, the recently retired chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, thumping his fist on a committee report from the mid-1960s with a faded orange cover entitled *Winning the Cold War: The U.S. Ideological Offensive*.

"Now, the title is stupid, of course," Fascell exclaimed. "But what I was talking about with this baby here is simple. Letting the rest of the world know who we are—that we're good people, with good precepts about how to enjoy life, not going around killin' each other, that sort of thing. Question is, how do you do that?"

Dante Fascell is a tiny, rumpled man who knows everyone in Miami by name. Since the Sixties, he has been interested in establishing an overt version of the covert programs that anticommunist U.S. labor unions, important among his constituents, once operated abroad on behalf of the CIA. Fascell gained unexpected support on a sunny afternoon in the summer of 1982 when Ronald Reagan, addressing the British Parliament at Westminster, broached the idea of promoting democracy throughout the world. Like many of the President's policy proposals, the Endowment had its roots in a story he had been told—in this case, of how the Soviet Union was bringing young Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans back to Moscow for education and training and sending them home as dedicated Communists. The West, Reagan believed, should have a system of its own, one that would teach the young people of the world to be good democrats.

"We had found ourselves a powerful ally," Fascell told me, "the President of the United States. We had a horse and so we rode that horse. Changed the bill around and rammed it through." Instead of a single, nonpartisan institute, there would be institutes staffed and run by the Democratic and Republican parties, the AFL-CIO, and the Chamber of Commerce. 'Hell, yeah, they were on board," Fascell recalled. "They got a piece of the pie. They got paid off. Democrats and Republicans, the Chamber of Commerce, along with labor."

The first, and to date the only, president of the Endowment, Carl Gershman, is a lifelong combatant in the ideological wars that captured Reagan's attention more than a decade ago. Before coming to the Endowment in 1984, he served as an aide to Jeane Kirkpatrick at the U.N. and, before that, as executive director of the Social Democrats USA, a splinter group of the Socialist Party. With only a small, disciplined cadre of a few hundred members, the Social Democrats USA assumed a range of



mid-level bureaucratic positions in the Reagan Administration and, simultaneously, in the foreign affairs bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO. In the appointment of Carl Gershman to head the National Endowment for Democracy, the Social Democrats USA hit the jackpot. With the stroke of a pen they gained a well-funded organization ($18 million in its first year) that was supported by the major institutional actors in American life and the federal government, dedicated to pursuing its own particular brand of anticommunist, pro-labor, pro-democratic politics around the world.

The spare white walls of Gershman's office are hung in the highest of democratic chic: blurry hand-printed posters from the Solidarity underground. A parade of black loose-leaf binders marches across his functional book-

Illustrations by Steve Brodner

shelves, each one identical to its neighbor. The sameness of the binders suggests they are but parts of a single code, the DNA of the new world order. Inside are the details of the Endowment's programs—in Russia, Slovakia, Burkina Faso, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, and more than seventy other nations.

"You've got to get together with our people," Carl Gershman suggested when I visited him in Washington in the fall. "We're going to have a conference in Zagreb with Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian democrats together with the British and the Germans. It's going to be a real chance to build democracy. Maybe we can get you over there."

In the Esplanade ballroom the participants have resumed their seats to listen to the American donors, some of whom may, perhaps, actually be intending to give them money. Why else would the Americans have flown over so many people from New York and Washington and paid for so many rooms at such an expensive hotel? The cost of the hotel rooms alone, estimates Viktor Ivančić, editor of the *Feral Tribune*, whose mix of satire and razor-sharp political commentary has made it Croatia's leading independent weekly, would pay for an entire month of his paper. This is hardly an insignificant sum. A recent issue of the paper featured a picture of the Croatian president Dr. Franjo Tudjman locked in a passionate, naked embrace with the Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosević, with the legend "Is this what we fought for?" underneath. Dr. Tudjman is not famous for his sense of humor, but his response to the picture gives some evidence, at least, that the prevailing opinion may well be mistaken. The Croatian government subsequently levied a staggering tax of 15,000 deutsche marks per issue of the *Tribune* under the laws it had passed to govern pornography. What Ivančić and most of the participants really need is not talk or, in most cases, money but real and lasting pressure, applied by the Western countries that fund their governments, to guarantee freedom of the press and other basic human rights.



Unfortunately, what the conference participants receive from their American benefactors is neither meaningful diplomatic pressure nor material assistance but something less tangible. "I have been involved in discussions of the importance of this kind of meeting for several years," announces David Phillips, head of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation, which helped to organize the dramatic testimony in October 1990 of a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl who lied in nationally televised congressional hearings about Iraqi troops tearing babies from their incubators, and who was later identified as the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States. (In November of 1990, the Congressional Human Rights Foundation received a donation from the Kuwaiti government of $50,000—a sum surpassed that year only by the grant to the foundation from the NED.) "I have participated in working groups in the U.S. with Slovenes," Phillips reports. "I have participated in conflict resolution with Croats and Serbs. We have instituted an Internet dialogue number."

Obrad Kesić, of the International Research and Exchange Board, has come to organize seminars on Western political theory, a decision "based on trends in funding, and also on changes in the region." Willemina Verloop, a blue-eyed Dutchwoman from the European Action Council for Peace in the Balkans, a networking group with no money to spend, shakes her long, blonde tresses at the ceiling, looking this way and that, as if posing for photographers whom only she can see. The Montenegrins are entranced: they will pursue her avidly, passionately, at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, for the entire duration of the conference.

The lights in the Esplanade ballroom dim. Charles Aanenson, the USAID representative to Croatia and Slovenia in Zagreb, has come equipped with an overhead projector and a roll-up screen, on which he projects the notes for his presentation neatly outlined in blue marker. He smiles incessantly, without any visible strain and entirely without reason. "Just now we have an RFA [a request for application]," he informs the participants, who stare blankly back at him, "and we're requesting applications by next Friday. We want to get back to you and to give you our fax numbers." In the half-lit ballroom the expressions on the faces of the participants around the table are no longer visible: all remaining flickers of expectation have vanished beneath freshly formed masks of sullen indifference. Michael Simmons, a roly-poly man representing the American Friends Service Committee, speaks of his work dealing with "the problems that women are facing in the transition period," problems that "are very similar to the problems we are facing in the U.S." A Croatian woman sitting near him fiddles with the tip of her shoe. She looks up at Simmons and then

around the room with an expression of pained disbelief. The American Friends Service Committee, which Simmons represents, has organized, or is organizing, "a conference on the problems of gays and lesbians in the region," a project that, whatever its value in the eyes of its sponsors, leaves the conference participants distinctly unmoved. It is at this point that the tension breaks and a hum of conversation, deliberate, rude, rises up from the conference tables like a gathering cloud of angry bees.

All the participants now understand what the more experienced of them had gathered from the beginning of Gershman's speech: the Americans have come to talk not to them but to each other, about the marvelous projects they are sponsoring here and in countries all around the world; to meet brave Eastern Europeans, their counterparts in the pursuit of freedom and democracy; to see the city of Zagreb, with its acres of Austro-Hungarian architecture, with its buildings the color of lemon-flavored tea; to drink late in the bars and restaurants on the expense accounts of their organizations; and then to go home, exhausted, completely satisfied with work well-done.

The attitude of the Americans is one that the conference participants find, for understandable reasons, insulting. For the next two days they will eat all they can at the breakfast buffet—laden, in the Austrian fashion, with smoked fish and roast pig, ham, fruit, yogurt, and cake—order coffee from room service, and watch CNN and MTV, all the while feeling guilty about the great and unnecessary expenses they have incurred in order to come here. In their guilt they will roam through the curved hallways outside the ballroom, whose walls are hung with photographs of the hotel's many famous guests, which, taken consecutively, provide a brief chronological guide to the recent history of the Balkans. There is Fats Domino, Liv Ullmann, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Catherine Deneuve, Louis Armstrong, Woody Allen, Telly Savalas, and Ike and Tina Turner, emblems of the Western orientation of the Yugo-Communists under Tito. And then there are those whose connections to the Balkans are more immediately familiar to television viewers in the West: the British Lord Carrington, the French general Philippe Morillon, the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, George Soros, and the intrepid duo of David Owen and Cyrus Vance.

For those who have the time to read, plenty of literature is handed out by the donors, which offers the conference participants, if they are inclined or able to read it, a revealing glimpse into the collective subconscious of the people who have brought them here. Eran Fraenkel, a dark, intense American in a suit, has already puzzled his Eastern European audience with a summary of his work with Search for Common Ground, one of the Endowment's pet projects in the region. What his organization does, Fraenkel explains, is "to launch processes based on conflict resolution to change the dynamics of communal interaction," processes that, as any casual viewer of the nightly news can attest, should be welcome in the Balkans, but that involve the use of "object-oriented dynamics" and other mysteries too complex to allow for easy description in standard spoken English.

"Towards Sustainable Peace in the Balkans," the pamphlet handed out by Paula Gutlove of the Balkans Peace Project, provides a somewhat clearer and more detailed exposition of what it calls "conflict resolution theories and techniques." Foremost among these is the practice of "sculpting," "a tool used both in psychodrama and family therapy" in which the "protagonists" form "living sculptures" from fellow members of the group. "The use of family or group members as the 'clay,'" the project instructs, "allows these individuals to explore for themsel[ves] the physical and psychological feelings generated by their position in the sculpture." As "Person a)" in the Peace Project pamphlet explains, "I feel ambivalent and insecure, I don't know what I am supposed to do. . . . I feel fear because my right hand hurts. It is both a physical and emotional pain. I am very tired. I am not joking!" "Person b)" reports feeling "tense in my neck and the left part of my body. I have a pain in my hand and it feels strange. This is not a natural posture."

TO PROMOTE CONFLICT RESOLUTION, THE "PROTAGONISTS" FORM "LIVING SCULPTURES" FROM FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

The value of these techniques can be measured, in classic analytic fashion, by the extraordinary resistance some participants seem to feel toward their would-be therapists: "The Zagreb workshop began with an evening of introductions, during which some participants suggested that in the current situation conflict resolution was irrelevant. One participant stated, for example, that he was very suspicious of psychological methods, 'particularly the possibility of applying psychology to this . . . conflict where military action continues. Imagine that this was 1939 and Hitler had just invaded Poland and a group of psychologists were trying to do conflict resolution between Germans and Poles. . . .' Others felt that we did not fully understand the political reality of Croatia's current situation,

particularly regarding the occupied territories and the situation of displaced people."

To judge by such responses, the members of the Zagreb workshop clearly have not read the interview with Joseph Montville, a former American diplomat and a leader of the Peace Project, that appeared in the Croatian weekly *Glas Koncila–Katolički tjednik*. "I have studied conflict and violence," Montville informs the Croatian people. "I have specialized in ethnic conflicts. I have studied genocide. I have written an article, 'The Pathology and Prevention of Genocide.' I have studied the Holocaust and genocide of the Jews as conducted by the Christians of Europe. I have studied the genocide of Red Khmers in Cambodia. I have learned something about the power of genocide over victims. . . . Genocide has a genuinely devastating psychological impact. When one group of people wishes to murder another for no other reason than ethnic or religious identity," Montville helpfully explains, "demonstrating in the process that they have no right to live, . . . this is the worst blow to someone's identity." If this is dialogue worthy of Woody Allen's early, funny films, it is not far from the more sober faith of the rest of the donors: that by exchanging views in a frank and open manner in a fine hotel, even the bloodiest, most intractable harms of the world can be put right.

"I KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT ROMANIA. . . . IT WAS LIKE GOING TO ALTOONA OR ARKANSAS, OR ONE OF THOSE PLACES"

In Zagreb the local conference attendees see only the goofy benevolence of the exporters of American democracy. Earlier in Washington, I had learned that the missionary idealism rested on a solid base of political savvy. By combining the political muscle of the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Democratic and Republican parties, Dante Fascell had been able to create a lobbying machine that would ensure the funding of Carl Gershman's idealistic schemes in perpetuity.* As a political creation, the National Endowment for Democracy is undoubtedly a masterpiece, the Sistine Chapel of our legislative arts. Like all great works of art, it stirs the greatest wonder and awe: a patronage scheme done up in the vivid hues of democratic ideals and the starry deeds of democrats the world over.

Though by law it is a private agency, the National Endowment for Democracy and its four member institutes, representing the Democratic and Republican parties, the AFL-CIO, and the Chamber of Commerce, receive most of their funding (which amounted to more than $50 million in 1995) from the federal treasury. The disposition of these funds has not gone unnoticed by government accountants, whose dry subject headings—"Project Objectives Are Vague," "Grantees Have Not Implemented Evaluation Procedures," "Grants Are Not Adequately Controlled and Accounted For"—suggest that public money is being misspent. In past years the NED institutes have also used their funding to meddle in the domestic politics of other countries, funneling money to Nicolas Ardito Barletta, the military-backed presidential candidate in the 1984 Panamanian elections, and sending over half a million dollars to right-wing union opponents of François Mitterrand. More recently, the International Republican Institute spent $617,000 of the $628,600 it raised privately between 1988 and 1990 on the party's national convention.

* *The Endowment's board, responsible for overseeing the activities of the NED's member institutes, generously includes representatives of each: Richard Lugar, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Democratic power broker Lynn Cutler; John T. Joyce of the Bricklayers Union; and Edward Donley of Air Products and Chemicals. Recently departed members of the NED board include former Republican National Committee chairmen Bill Brock and Frank Fahrenkopf; former Democratic National Committee chairman Charles Manatt; Dante Fascell; Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO; and Jay Van Andel, chairman of Amway. The International Republican Institute, chaired by Senator John McCain, a power on the Foreign Relations Committee, numbers among its directors the partisan minds of Frank Fahrenkopf, former secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger, former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, and assorted Republican members of Congress. Guests on recent International Republican Institute trips overseas included Winston Lord and James Baker's son. The National Democratic Institute is run by Dante Fascell; Andrew Young; Geraldine Ferraro; and diamond merchant Maurice Tempelsman, former beau of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Charles Manatt is now a director of the Chamber of Commerce's Center for International Private Enterprise, smallest of the NED institutes, whose other directors include Richard Lesher, president of the Chamber of Commerce; John A. Bohn of Moody's; Thomas Bell of Gulfstream Aerospace; and Andy Ireland, vice president of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. The directors of the Free Trade Union Institute include Lane Kirkland; Lynn Williams, president of the United Steelworkers; Linda Chavez-Thompson of the Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Marvin Boede of the United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada; and James Hatfield of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International, whose collective lack of experience abroad is easily compensated for by their influence at home.*

The longer one considers this Homeric catalogue of the good and great, each with a small corps of relatives and retainers, the easier it is to understand why the United States Senate voted in 1993 to save the Endowment by a vote of three to one.

In the eyes of its critics, at least, the National Endowment for Democracy is to the post–Cold War world what the Tweed Ring was to nineteenth-century New York City—doling out patronage jobs, high-level missions abroad, and other foreign-policy perks to Democrats and Republicans, big labor and big business, their retainers and protégés, wives, children, nieces, and nephews. Indeed, the Democratic and Republican parties have used tax dollars to construct their own international empires on which the sun never sets. The International Republican Institute, like its Democratic counterpart, maintains well-staffed offices in Washington and field offices in Moscow, Albania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. As Shirley Green, director of program support for the Republican Institute, told me, "We do have some people with some kind of foreign background. But we're mostly people with political training. It would be nice to send someone to Bulgaria who knew everything in the world about that country," she added. "But it's more important that they know how to build a political party, and how the democratic system works."

As she suggests, the experience that qualifies the young men and women of the party institutes for their jobs is gathered not in graduate schools or through hands-on development work but in the war rooms of presidential campaigns, in congressional and lobbying efforts, and through family relationships to top party officials. By deploying the politically wired young around the world, the Endowment has found the perfect emissaries of its missionary vision of democracy. The National Democratic Institute's senior program officer, Michael Marshall, a former assistant field director of the California State Democratic Party, recently returned from a stint in Romania. "I knew very little about Romania. I didn't even speak the language," Marshall admitted over a plate of pad thai at a Washington restaurant. "It was like going to Altoona or Arkansas, or one of those places, and trying to find common ground with the local people." Wherever they are, the institute's staff adapts the distinctive methods of the American political campaign. "We can do a conference in ten days," Marshall explained to me. "It may not be the most focused conference or whatever, but we tend to be, 'Let's get it done, let's get it done, let's move ahead.'"

Once in Romania or Kazakhstan, the institute's staff, like world travelers before them, have experiences that stay with them for the rest of their lives. "This may not be the most politic thing to say," Marshall reflected, as the plates were cleared from our table, "but on a personal level it was a tremendous adventure, riding a night train across Romania with Gypsies and soldiers, arriving at nine o'clock for a meeting, not having bathed in three days. They had rented out a theater, and on the marquee it said, 'Mr. Michael A. Marshall.' And the questions they asked me were all about democracy, the very fundamental things we took a multiple-choice test on in eleventh grade but haven't spent any time discussing since."

"Twelve days ago the last employee of our radio station came back from digging trenches," says Adil Kulenović, a former professor of philosophy at the University of Sarajevo and now the director of the independent Bosnian radio station Studio 99. "Our orientation is not to accept a policy of ethnic division, and so we are attacked both by the Serbs and by the Bosnian government."

Kulenović and the other members of the delegation have not attended the opening meeting because their U.N. flight was delayed. Whether because of the delay in their arrangements or the lack of heat, running water, and



food in their city, they have not arrived in a particularly amiable mood. Time and time again they interrupt the conference workshops with complaints, showing what many of the donors seem to regard as an unhealthy tendency to put their own very particular needs above those of the rest of the group.

"The space from which we broadcast is eighty meters large, and we cannot afford any glass for our windows. I ask you to understand that we are engaged in a serious business. I go out of Sarajevo and the money I spend on travel and food is money that we desperately need for our work."

There is something in the vehemence of Kulenović's manner, in the fixity of the muscles in his face, that gives the impression of a

powerful intelligence laboring beneath a weight of anger and depression, and it has unsettled the donors. Or perhaps it is the pattern of brief hesitations in the speech of his well-mannered translator, Sandra Hodžić, a young reporter from the station, whose slight silences punctuate Kulenović's remarks like drops of rain on a pane of glass. "I kindly ask you not to invite us to these conferences anymore if you are not prepared to help us," Hodžić translates. "We feel very stupid, and you are only making our tragedy longer."

The donors nod sagely. "He is a common Eastern European type, very depressed, very angry," one American donor says later, clearly taken aback. The Eastern Europeans, however, all seem quietly delighted by Adil Kulenović. "He's right, of course," a Croatian participant says. "Of course, none of us would dare to say it. The donors know nothing, and so they talk to each other. If you criticize one, it becomes impossible to get anything from the others."

In the workshops, in the hotel lobby, at dinner, at the cocktail party that follows at the home of the American ambassador, Peter Galbraith, who smiles broadly amid teams of waiters bearing canapés, the Sarajevans make no effort at all to hide their disgust. "It's all the same, you know," says Hodžić, a veteran, at nineteen, of Westerners and their conferences. "Lots of talk, empty promises, expensive hotels."

"They do this for themselves, for their own pleasure, to show off to each other," explains the assistant manager of Radio Zid. "It is only right we should make them uncomfortable."

That Peter Galbraith (who, short and dark, looks nothing like his famous father, John Kenneth) has inherited something of his father's genes becomes evident toward the end of the evening, when he is asked about the larger aims of American policy in the region. "I wake up every morning and look in the mirror," he snaps, "hoping to see Neville Chamberlain looking back, saying, 'Peace in our time.'" Ambassador Galbraith is understandably nervous. If he stays any longer, he will be late for dinner with the foremost American policy maker in the region, ABC News anchor Peter Jennings, who, red-eyed, patient, and polite, was seen checking in earlier this afternoon at the Esplanade's front desk.

Will there be a wider war between the Serbs and the Croats? "That's what everyone tells me," Peter Jennings says, gesturing to the tall, dark-haired man at his right. "Have you met my producer, David Gelber?" Why are we here, and to what end? "That's what I hope to find out," Jennings answers. "Maybe we can have coffee tomorrow and talk it over." Unfortunately, grand questions of state will go unanswered: Jennings will be leaving for Sarajevo at seven the next morning.

Beneath the starry ceiling of the Esplanade ballroom, Senad Pećanin, editor of the Sarajevo newspaper *Dani*, is berating the weary and restive participants at the conference's final session: "At the beginning of the war we tried very hard to prove that we are also a nation of Slavonian origins, secularized Europeans of the Moslem religion, with the confirmed tradition of multi-ethnical living. At the beginning of the war you could meet on every corner naive fools—I was one of them—who believed in ideals of justice, in principles of the international order, in the United Nations Charter, in the General Declaration of Human Rights, and other, similar papers. The experience, unfortunately, has taught us not to believe in anything except for the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

In broken English, Pećanin reviews the increasingly totalitarian practices of his own government, which, like so many in the region, has used foreign aid as a means of consolidating its one-party rule. "I am responsibly claiming, when speaking of my country, that the practice of giving aid has been catastrophic until now," Pećanin charges. ". . . What catastrophic mistakes have occurred I will illustrate for you with a few examples. During the first two years of the war over 90 percent of the foreign aid for the Bosnian media was given to a half-state Sarajevan daily newspaper. The majority of that aid was spent for opening the correspondency offices, so that now two thirds of its editors are living in Washington, Milan, Stockholm, Zagreb, et cetera. They are connected with Bosnia about as much as the average viewer of CNN. But on Bosnia's account and its suffering they are living very comfortably, much better than before the war."

The Americans can hardly be blamed for wanting to introduce former Yugoslavs to the joys of capital hopping. In one recent year, the International Republican Institute spent over $200,000 of its government funding on business-class airfares to fly the party faithful around the globe, spreading democracy.

"There are lots of similar examples," Pećanin concludes, "so I would like to ask you: Is your goal, with the means of this scandalous policy of giving aid, to discourage those few people in Bosnia who think that even with this war it is worth fighting and sacrificing for democracy? If so, then, gentlemen, you are achieving your goal very well."

Surreptitiously, then openly, the donors have begun to look at their watches. They don't want to miss their flights. ■

NIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN

By Thom Jones



Her phone was one of those black, old-time, heavy jobs with a Bakelite dial, the base made out of ceramic or something—granite maybe, or lead. In her condition she could barely lift it. It was getting all but impossible to dial. She looked at it and wondered when he would call. The left hand was bad. No fast-draw Billy-the-Kid hand; it had no strength whatever. When it worked, it was a cold blue claw and she could hook things with it. Captain Hook. People saw her Mickey Mouse around with the old phone and there was no sympathy.

The right hand was a little stronger, her bread-and-butter hand. But as the years passed it also got weaker. She liked to keep everything about her the same. This house, this home, her all-her-life home, forty-seven years in a shotgun shack. The once cheerful and still not such a bad bungalow was home. The doors and windows were now secured with metal bars, a little crack action down on the corner, but hey, that's L.A. for ya. Two bedrooms, a full basement, the add-on front porch built when her father was still alive. Busy beaver with a paintbrush and flower gardens was he. He had a mania for tidiness, and her mother, too, which made the latter hell on wheels when the diagnosis came through; when they learned that she would be crippled for life. Turned her mother into a pisser.

First memories. Let me see. She could remember walking when she was maybe four. Just a little, you know, it was all so vague, looking back through the haze of the bitter past. Ugly prosthetic shoes. Then the wheelchair. Oh, God, your bony ass could get sore in one of those, day after day, even under a pile of lambskin. So how could a mother not love her only kid? Well, who said she didn't—it was just that when you have to wait on somebody hand and foot, you start feeling like a slave. Her father, Harry, rose to the occasion and her mother, Barbara, too, after he passed on fourteen years ago. Bar-

Thom Jones is the author of The Pugilist at Rest, *a collection of short stories. His next collection,* Cold Snap, *will be published by Little, Brown next month. His last story for* Harper's Magazine, *"Daddy's Girl," appeared in the March 1994 issue.*

Illustration by Jon Conrad

bara finally accepted the situation and made the best of it. On top of everything else there was all the stress and strain of an adult daughter living with a mother, but what are you going to do? Then Barbara ups and dies. Her face looked like a fried prune in the coffin—a final accusation: "See what you *did* to me!"

Quite unlike her temporal home—her own scrawny, dilapidated body—the house was still in good condition. Take a normal human body. You could abuse it with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and junk food and still it would last longer than practically anything. It would last longer than a GE toaster, a pair of Levi's, or a plain gold wedding ring (by the fiftieth anniversary, if you finger it enough, if you're the nervous type, you'll wear it clean through). The average human body would last longer than an African elephant, a Panama parrot, a Rolls-Royce—just about everything you laid eyes on except a house. But not the puny body that was hers. The house was still going strong. Sell it and she'd have two years in a nursing home. It had been a waste of money to keep the yard so perfect. Putting on the vinyl siding—whew, she got jobbed on that one, but the salesman was so nice—man, that motherfucker *poured* out the charm. Oh well. It did look good. The roof needed work. Maybe next year. If there is a next year, huh?—or even a tomorrow. If she could implement the plan there wouldn't be, but she was chickenshit in regards to the plan.

There was the illusion of safety in keeping everything approximately the same. Better the old phone than something new. A brand-new, glossy, plastic, featherweight phone would be a kind of formal acknowledgment. Dead wasn't so bad but dying like this was a bitch. A real live sumbitch and then pfffttt! So much for this incarnation. Hey, God, what was I supposed to figure out forty-seven years in this wheelchair? Forty years plus of staring at the ceiling in silence, looking out the window, listening to classical FM radio, staring at the floor, looking at her face in the bureau mirror—a pretty face once, now not so hot. Stare at the ceiling, stare at the floor. Drink gin and watch TV. She never got out much but she knew life all too well, this life, this shadow cave. Nobody but nobody was happy. They might think so, but they were wrong. When you got right down to it, they would rue the day they were born. Don't believe it? Wait and see. Ain't nobody escaped dying. Yeah, everybody wants to go to heaven, but ain't nobody wants to die.

Bobby was back in town. A blast from the past. Just out of prison and he lays a diamond necklace on her, a little trifle he picked up. He barely hits the streets and he's stealing again. Came over that afternoon, hardly said hi, and he's on the phone trying to buy her a new refrigerator 'cause the one she's got is "too loud." Whoever heard of such a thing? Too loud. That was pure Bobby. "But I spent a lot of money on that refrigerator. It's not even a year old."

"Yeah," he says, "and it just goes to show ya, they've been making refrigerators for years and listen to it. How can you even think? It's loud in jail, let me tell you, but that refrigerator is a killer. That sorry motherfucker is putting out Richter waves. You gotta go foreign-made. Japanese."

"What, a Panasonic refrigerator?"

"Hey, I don't know what you call them. All I know is they don't take over the damn house. That fucking thing is overbearing. It's audacious and it's a damn kitchen appliance. Where does it get off? Huh?"

So Bobby hops on the phone and starts making calls. On hold, he cranes his neck around the corner and says, "America can't make a refrigerator anymore. What is it but a damn box, a compressor, and some shelves and trays? People are graduating from Harvard with engineering degrees—you think they could make a better refrigerator! Somebody ought to look into it. That thing you got is loud. It's a fucking Yugo. The German ones are much better—like precision, handcrafted engineering and all that jive. The Italian ones look the best, but for a combination of quiet and style, my personal preference is Japanese. A Jap will take one home and say to the old lady, 'How you liking this fridge, baby?' And he'll say to the little kids, 'How you liking this fridge, honorable son, honorable daughta?' And the son will say, 'Not bad, Pop, but the ice tastes like dishwater.' Honorable daughter will say, 'Daddy, my Popsicles are gooey.' And that Jap has got his pencil and paper out. That Jap will hop in his Lexus su-preme dream and drive back to the factory at eleven o'clock at night, roll up his sleeves, and go to town. Make it better! Make it quiet. Those Nippers can hustle. Around the clock. I mean, I ain't making no put-downs, no sweeping generalizations—I ain't no racist—but there it is. I mean we could wait for the Chinks to start making them, then they really will be cheap—Hong Dong or whatever—but why jack around? I got a plane to catch in the morning."

Suddenly he's talking turkey with a sales representative. Oh yeah—the automatic defrosters cause all the racket. They've got side-by-side doors or over-and-under. Egg storage in the door. Colors. Automatic icemaker.

In less than an hour a delivery truck shows up, and Bobby and the delivery guys (Asians) are transferring all of her food from the old refrigerator to the new one. There isn't much—lettuce, baloney, milk, the usual. Bobby says, "They underpower the motors. On a hot day it's huffing constantly, I bet. Sounds like a D-6 Cat with a messed-over muffler. Ever since I walked in the door! I'm really getting a hard-on for this thing."

A worker plugs in the new one and flips on the power settings for the freezer, meat drawer, and the main compartment.

"Is it working? I can't hear anything."

"Yeah, it's working. Absolute quiet. Isn't it great? And black is a good color, don't you think? Black, sleek lookin'. Pretty cool, huh?"

Bobby pays the delivery people with a roll of crisp hundred-dollar bills. "Thanks a lot, fellas," he says, handing them each an extra hun-

dred. "And here, my good friends, is a little kiss good-bye. A little shoeshine money. Such fast and courteous service. The world needs more people who take special pains and do things right." The two delivery men hang their heads, smiling nervously while Bobby squeezes his roll like a tennis ball and grinds his teeth. Finally he turns away from them and, bowing, they back out of the house.

Jeez! The size of that roll made her paranoid. Bobby had to be printing money again. Thirty-four months in prison and he comes out and starts committing a federal crime. He would never learn. The diamond necklace, bought with phony money or stolen outright? Don't ask. It was merchandise. It gave her a small thrill to wear it, but she really didn't want the damn thing or the new refrigerator either. Ultimately it would be nothing but guilt and depression. It was sad to see Bobby do this. He'd keep it up and take another fall. There was no need to drive him off with a lecture, though. And she had to get in her Carl and Maizie story. Those two were under her skin like bugs, but it was hard to talk about it with all of the refrigerator stuff going on. Her story was rambling and incoherent but Bobby was quick; he got the gist of it. She felt better to get it out, and he did listen with empathy. He kissed her tears away and carried her to bed, pulled back the sheets, white satin sheets, and Bobby remembered.

"You still got a thing about white satin sheets. While I was in jail I thought of you sleeping in these sheets, me on muslin." Christ, it had been so long since a man touched her she practically came when he picked her up.

So good to see him. Cripe. Japanese refrigerators. What a kick. Little unexpected good things sometimes came along when you thought it was all over. Real nice to see Bobby Brown again. That's probably why she hung on. You never knew.

He said he'd call after supper around nine, and the phone rings exactly at nine. "Hello, baby, what's happening? It's me, the keed!" Somebody actually, finally did something they promised they would do.

"Hi."

But then he's hasty, impatient. "What are you playing? What's that music?"

"Mozart."

"Mozart? You must be in some slow-down time zone. Who's got that kind of patience? I remember the days when—shit, oh, you know. But time gallops, even in jail. A year is a day." She heard him flip his Zippo, click the little carbon wheel, and heard the small dull bap of ignition, a small explosion, then heard him click the lighter shut and take a drag off a cigarette. He said, "Has what's-her-face, the helper, gone?"

"Yeah."

"Yeah?" Puff. He really sucked on a cigarette. Really liked to smoke. He said, "Isn't it scary? All alone for the night?"

"No, this is the best time. Why did you rush off? Why did you leave?"

"I hate to admit it, but I had to score. This guy, your man, Carl, sounds like a real sleazeball if you ask me. I'm really appalled by the way things have gone funny since I've been away. You can't trust anybody anymore. Even square johns are going to shit. If I could get a passport, I'd fucking emigrate. New Zealand. The last good place. Boring, but fucking safe."

"Oh, God! I'm so messed up I can't think straight," she said.

"Your best friend runs off with your boyfriend. I would guess you would be messed up. I don't blame you. I thought you said Carl was married. What about his wife?"

"Oh, God, she hasn't got a clue. She's out of it. Doesn't know a thing."

"What do you mean, doesn't know? They always know. I mean you can't imagine it because you're in love with this guy. You're blind to the whole deal."

"Aren't you supposed to quit smoking when you've got diabetes?"

"Yes, God, oh fuck; it's one hundred times worse. Don't say that!

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My doctor told me if I don't quit I'm a goner, but what can I do? I can't drink. I can't eat. I'm, like, going to smoke. I'm a rebel."

"The Leader of the Pack," she said.

He laughed at this and went off on a rap. "Hey, man! Hey, man! Why don'chew get lost on that Kow-a-saki, man? Where did you get that high-windin' piece of shit, anyhow? Lay out all that bread for your leathers, and ya mmm mmm rrrrrrr motorcycle boots, then you come 'round with a Kow-a-saki? Wait till them skinheads catch you on that Jap motherfucker."

"You inflicted that refrigerator on me and now you're Jap-bashing!"

He was laughing like a maniac. "Get you a Harley, man. Hey, man! 'He's a rebel and he'll never be any good.' Born to raise hell. Drank two double espressos tonight. I'm ready for the emergency room. Like crystal meth would make me calm in this situation. I order decaf, but they gave me straight. Eee-yow! You think I was revved up this afternoon? Man, I'm wild now."

"I've got downers," she said. "You could have asked me. I miss you."

"I'm ready to fly out the window! Carl, man. I have a few pointers on that motherfucker. He just tells you that he doesn't like having such a 'limited' relationship and he doesn't want to see you again?"

"And Maizie is in love and I have to listen to her because I'm still dependent on her. She's my driver, my lifeline, and I have to listen to her goo-goo horseshit. God! I just want to strangle them both. Somebody ought to take those two cocksuckers out in the desert and set them on fire."

"She's goo-goo 'cause he took her to heaven. You know what I mean? He took her to heaven," Bobby said.

"Burn them! A kerosene necklace. I am serious," she shouted.

"I know you are. Your whole life you have to be genial and pleasant. From day one you have to be nice, but you aren't a dependent person really . . . actually. I mean if you could move around, if you were mobile, you would be more like a barracuda. A muncher."

"That's it, Bobby. You got it. I have to play nice. I'm sick of it. Make me normal for half an hour and those two are toasted. I would operate outside the boundaries of conventional morality."

"The female Steven Seagal!"

"God, make me normal for a half hour! Havoc and mayhem."

"When I came by this afternoon it was like nice, but I got going on that refrigerator thing, I was exhausted, and that refrigerator was driving me crazy. I would never allow that kind of noise in my own house. Fucking *violating* me like that. America is finished but she don't give a shit, she's in Carl and Maizie land. Carl took her to heaven, don't you know. That's why she's goo-goo. Ain't nobody ever take you to heaven? Set 'em on fire," he laughed. "I mean you don't let people walk on you. You get it back. I hear what you're saying."

"I've never been like this. I'm so full of hate. I am almost afraid of all the hate and meanness I have inside," she said.

"Remember that time out in the backyard when I had drunk around the clock and showed up drunk and we drank that whiskey and then we went and got more? We went down to the bar together and you kept pissing about how I was going to dump the wheelchair. But I had presence of mind. I wasn't that drunk. You were pissed. I saw 'set 'em on fire' that night."

She sighed. "That was a great night. I think about that night all the time. I don't remember anything about getting pissed."

"That was the night that defined my life. Actions proceeded from that night from which there was no turning back. When I was in the joint I played the guitar riff from the middle of 'Light My Fire' six million times and discovered the meaning of life. I don't know about Mozart, but I do know rock 'n' roll. I know all about *the thing in itself* which exists in all things—this evil thing, this will to live on a planet where all is so goddamn nasty. Pain is the positive thing, the essential thing." She heard the Zippo click again. "Last night I drove by the Whiskey A Go Go. What a bummer. You ever see Enrique or Way-out Willie anymore? Hey, c'mon, baby. You didn't even know Carl then, and we had our laughs. We had good times. He wasn't even in the picture. This big hurt is going to pass off, believe me."

"Enrique is in prison," she said. "Willie, I don't know." She could picture him with the cigarette perched in the center of his mouth. He didn't handle cigarettes like a normal person; he sucked on them, in a big hurry for the nicotine. Bobby would practically eat a cigarette.

She took a sip from her bedside wineglass, popped down a couple Dramamine along with four Stelazine tablets. Robin's-egg blue pills chased with more wine. She wanted it to seem like old times, but things change. The image of him smoking made him seem so seedy. The gold lower-left eyetooth, the long fingernails with dirt under them. Stovepipe pants, white Converse sneakers. An expensive navy blazer, white shirt, conservative tie. Professional thief. Counterfeiter. But then she thought of Carl. Carl was a square, there was no denying.

"Hey, you'll get over this," he said. "Men are jerks. When I left for Australia, I had no idea I was hurting you. I thought we were just friends. I can only see the love thing in retro. You're at that point where you don't think you can get over it again. You can do it once, twice, three times, and then you lose the stomach for it. Does that make any sense?"

"I don't know," she said. "I don't know if I can make it anymore."

"To give someone trust or credibility, you listen to them and then buy into what they tell you. After they become your friend, you take on faith whatever else they may be pushing. Then they start lying and you believe them because you need to believe. If that was his picture in your room, the dude's a total square, baby. A man involved in real estate. White-on-white tie. Diamond rings. How could you fall for a straight john like that? Well, that's water over the bridge. Then suddenly—whoa! This other passion is cooking for Maizie. They're probably surprised to know you got hurt feelings!"

She finished off her glass of wine and felt it warm her. It was a subject she was sick of yet obsessed with, and this was another perspective. Nice of Bobby to try and cheer her up, but she was just so sick of it all.

"I mean, he's probably got an old rubber in his wallet—just in case. They fuck, maybe do some oral. They're really feeling up because they're doing something clandestine—naughty, sneaky. What a thrill. I mean now he's cheating at least two ways and this is really exciting. Are you feeling angry?"

"That," she said, "but more objective than usual. Disgusted."

"Fucking like a couple of dogs in heat. Get out a hose. You know, everybody does it, but they don't want the world to see it. And the reason they don't want the world to see it is because love manifested on this vibration is of a low order. It really isn't love, it's just lust, one of the four cardinal vices in the Buddhist scheme. Don't you just envy them?"

"God. No. What are the other three?"

"Three?"

"Cardinal vices?"

"Anger, avarice, and indolence. The cardinal virtues are chastity, generosity, gentleness, and humility."

"What are the Christian virtues?"

"What is this? You tell me."

"Faith, love, hope."

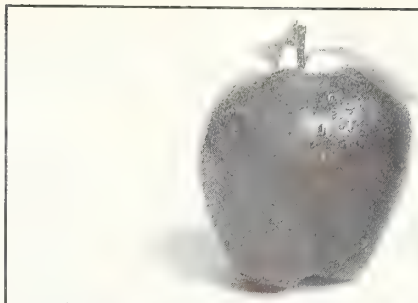
"I'm not a Christian, but it seems to me that if you can have sympathy for another human being, the walls break down. You want me to do a job on Carl?"

"Women don't think like men," she said. "Anyhow, you said he took her to heaven. She acts like she *is* in heaven. Don't try to give me aversion therapy—"

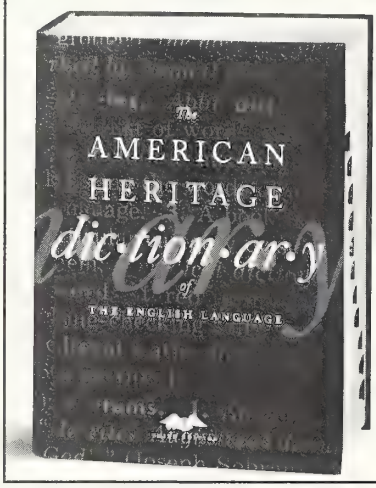
"You say you wanna set them on fire out in the desert—that's the downside of all this shit. Part and parcel. That's all I'm saying. Think of them like dogs in heat, it's easier that way. And never, but never, get involved with a married guy."

"I always imagined being carried away by the passion. Swept up in kisses. You're wrecking the whole deal for me."

"This is not *Gone with the Wind*. This is a couple of dogs in heat.



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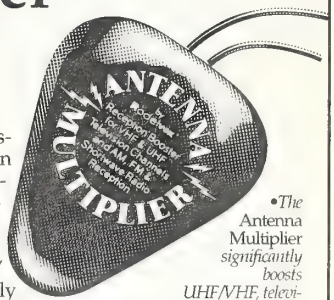
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These two are bad. Give me the match. Has Carl got kids?"

"Three."

"That selfish prick. He's got kids? That's splashing bad karma all over the place. Your boy Carl is a wrecking crew. He's screwed you over because he has this feeling for Maizie. You know how much time it takes to carry on an affair? Poor Carl, he needs *this* and he needs *that*. Fucks his kids, fucks his wife, fucks you—he's a sorry *motherfucker*. And you feel guilty crapping around with a married guy, right? You are not without blame. I get caught boosting and I do my time. I know the rules. Three years in the shitter."

"You're right," she said absently. "He always needs this and that."

"And he didn't have the balls to come right out with it. He's doing it incrementally. I ought to go over there now and kick the shit out of him. Where does he live? I'll drag his ass out of the house and lay a number on him."

"I'd like that."

"You're a barracuda. I'm not lying. Little Anthony and the Imperials, 'Tears on my pillow, pain in my heart'—that ain't you. Steven Seagal, I'm not lyin'. Where does he live? I'll get him tonight."

"Thank you," she said, "but no. I don't want him hurt, I guess. It was horrible. Now I feel better. It's good to hear your voice. It doesn't seem like twenty years, it seems like yesterday. Like we talked yesterday." The conversation was going nowhere for her. She was engulfed in a wave of desolation. Bobby kept on talking.

"But there were troubles yesterday. We always got troubles. Walk around on this planet and you're gonna have troubles. Only the mind does amazing things. It forgets the pain. You see pictures of people in a death camp—some guy points a camera at them and they smile, or somebody shows you a picture of Johnny and he's smiling and somebody says, 'Yeah, we took that shot of him four days before he blew his head off with the twelve-gauge.' Life is tricky that way. Fools you. I could do it, you know. I could blow my head off right now." She sensed real anguish in his voice but couldn't think of anything positive to say. There was a long pause.

"When Johnny gets on the other side, what happens?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"Like before you were born?"

"Just like that." He spoke with authority. With confidence and utter self-assurance.

"What if Johnny gets over to the other side and finds himself in a pile of shit—a pile of shit he can't get out of?"

"No, baby, this is it. What you see is what you get. You get this. So anyhow, Johnny with his twelve-gauge. Maybe somebody says a certain thing and he don't take out the shotgun but three years later gets cancer of the pancreas. Don't have the nerve to die *now*. Don't got the balls for it anymore. Suffers. Like big-time, excruciating pain. You know? Should have shot himself *then*. The part of him that can see in the future told him *then*. I'm not saying you should always follow your heart, but these unconscious drives are probably more correct than we will ever know."

She took the heavy receiver and shifted it to her other ear. Poised on the edge of her bed, she reached over with her right hand and poured herself another glass of wine. She opened the drawer on her night table and pulled out her stash. She couldn't believe what she was doing. The plan. Her grand inspiration was fast becoming a reality. She never thought she could pull it off, but she was doing it, taking charge.

"I could never shoot myself," she said.

"I could, and I've got a gun that is big enough to do it right," he said.

Either the Dramamine was hitting her fast or it was just the contact high. Had to be a contact high. She picked up four more Stelazine tablets and swallowed them with the wine. Like Dramamine, Stelazine had an anti-nausea effect; it would keep her from puking. Plus, it could really make you blotto. She looked at her stash. Her cache of Librium, glossy black and green capsules, five hundred or more; Valiums in blue; Xanax all pearly white; red and gray Darvons; Ludiomils in good-morn-

ng-sunshine orange; tricolored Tunal in red, redder, and baby blue; drab brown Triavil in the 4–10 proportion; there were pastel orange methadone diskets (just two of them ass kickers); some chalk-white meprobamate in the generic—wipe you out for sure; multicolored Dexedrine spansules; passionate purple Parnate; there were her Nembutals and the sea-green, let's-do-the-ob-up-right Placidyl gel caps (Baby Dills). The pills suddenly became an object of beauty, a treasure. It was better than unearthing a pirate captain's sea chest filled with glittering gold doubloons and shimmering jewels: emeralds, rubies, diamonds, and chips of anthracite coal—better because pills did things. They could alter the worst sensation permanently. They would do so presently. All you had to do was swallow. What a relief to finally end it. The richness and depth of color of the pills, pills so beautiful they made her hair hurt.

Maybe it was the wine. No, really, it was the Dramamine hitting home. On an empty stomach with wine it probably dissolved super fast. No Stelazine action yet, the feeling was definitely Dramamine. She would have to make fast work of the Librium, and after she asked him what time his plane took off she began swallowing the various pills and capsules with wine, ten at a time. It was like working on an assembly line, and her hand began to tire. She got down thirty and had to rest a moment. She poured another glass of wine and was quickly back at it. This was her job. Her last job.

She heard the Zippo go off again. He was smoking. Thinking. There was too much dead space. He didn't know what to say. He was trying to psych her up and was out of gas himself. He didn't realize that he had made the final act possible. She was proud of herself. Your friends do sometimes come through.

At last Bobby said, "You soundin' zone, baby."

"I'm straight," she said, "just tired. It makes me slur. Hey, isn't that some bad shit at the refugee camps in Zaire?" She grabbed at the

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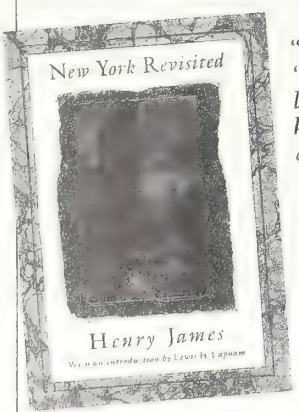
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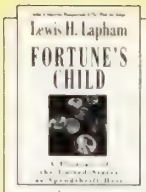
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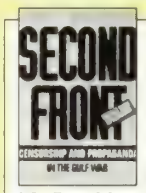
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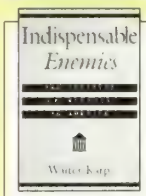
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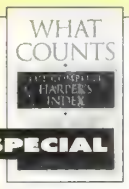
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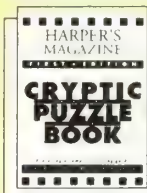
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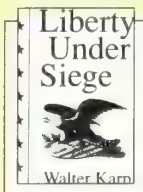
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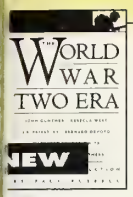
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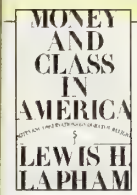
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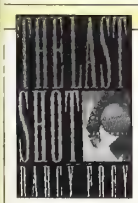
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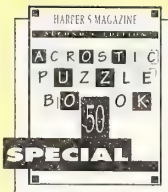
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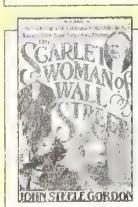
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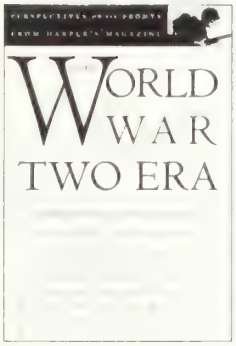
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L	O	O	C	N	U	K	A	R	E	E	M

NOTES FOR "QUO VADIS?"
Numeral 17 was placed in the wrong square in the diagram; it should have been one square to the left. Our apologies to all and congratulations to those who finished anyway.

Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

1. hidden; 2. pea-u(nder); 3. two mngs.; 4a. ed(it)s-story*; 4b. homonym; 5. *; 6. homonym; 7. homonym; 8. (con)tent; 9. s(t)ing; 10a. rev.; 10b. album-in; 11. hidden; 12a. (d)icers; 12b. I-sing-lass; 13. S.-M.I.T.-ten; 14a. Web(b)er; 14b. way-ward; 15a. ro(a)d; 15b. *; 16a. I-met-I(rev.)-zing; 16b. I-bid(rev.); 17. Battle-ax; 18. *; 19. a-cute; 20. (p)acer; 21a. hidden; 21b. pun; 22. get-a-ways; 23. two mngs.; 24. pun; 25. *; 26. two mngs.; 27. do[r(edhead)-man]t; 28. (p)odium; 29. tru(e)-or(rev.); 30. pun, U's; 31. slopp(i)er*; 32a. y-slide*; 32b. rev.; 33. homophone; 34. E.-seem(rev.); 35. s(aying)-vaster*; 36. la(U.)ds; 37. pun; 38. capsize; 39. un-Co.-O-L.; 40. "E" in "maker"*; 41. hidden; 42. moo-n.

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CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 149, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by May 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the June issue. Winners of the March Double Acrostic (No. 147) are Mary Baker, Thermopolis, Wyoming; Mary Catherine Moran, Baltimore, Maryland; and Roger Moyer, Alexandria, Virginia.

pills as the colors suited her mood.

"Yeah, bad. But if I'm laying in the gutter shitting and puking my guts out—and I have laid in gutters and done that, baby—nobody, no foreigner, comes along with an IV tube to save my black ass. I ain't even expecting it," he says.

"Jeez, you sent me a postcard from Kinshasa. What a great stamp. I got that card and I couldn't believe it—the Congo. I thought: He's in the Congo having an adventure and I'm stuck here. I used to wait for your letters. One week you were in Africa and the next week it was Finland. I thought: What is that boy doing?"

"I got fucked up on some bad dope in Africa, actually. Prett postage stamps is all they got in Kinshasa, believe me. You're thinkin he's in Africa having an adventur and it's horrible in Africa—bac home watching the Dodgers by th air conditioner is where it's at Everybody always thinks they'r missing out. It's an illusion."

She felt a surge of resolution an finished off the fourth handful pills. She could see that it was im possible to take all of them, but a least the barbiturates were in, th methadone was in, most of the Val um. Her stomach felt like a bowlin ball. But she didn't feel that fucke up. When was it going to hit? Wh hadn't it hit? What had happene When was this fucking show goin to end? She pulled out a half pint Gordon's gin and grabbed anoth handful of poison. It was time to g serious. You could never be too sur A big wave hit her and suddenly sh felt like she was blowing out to se It was a good feeling.

She heard a voice. It was Bobb Sounded like he was a million mil away. He sounded desperate. H voice shrill, pleading. "I said, 'Y really sound fucked up.' What kin of downers did you say you had?"

"I didn't say." She was slurring.

"I'm asking."

"Fifteen years' worth," she sai Shut up. Don't let the cat out of th bag now. Medic 1. Stomach pumpe Is that what she wanted? Was th just a hysterical gesture?

"Fifteen *years*' worth. Are you s rious?"

"Why?"

He sounded scared. "Well, 'cause just called to say good-bye. I can't ake it no more. I'm going to check ut. You know, shuffle off to Booga-ousa."

"That's why you scored?"

"Yeah. I mean, not to OD but to et my nerve up. You ain't trying to issuade me. You're doing it, too."

"It's too bad about the refrigera-or. No one's going to use—"

He lit yet another cigarette. She ould hear ice cubes rattling in a lass. "The fridge, the necklace, go-ng-away presents. I ain't got no-ody, baby," Bobby said. Pause. "I an't hear you, baby."

Her voice was a whisper. "I aven't got anyone either. Just you. I love you, Bobby."

The ice cubes clinking again. A ig pause. "I love you, too."

Another wave swept over her, eaving her calm and unafraid. It eemed like a long time had passed. "Are you on the nod?" she slurred.

"Shot some scag. Mozart—" he aid. There was a long pause. She unched the remote a couple of imes. It was too much effort to peak. The CD changer clicked and uddenly the Moody Blues were do-ng "Nights in White Satin." A very ong time before, it had been *their* song. She let the phone drop.

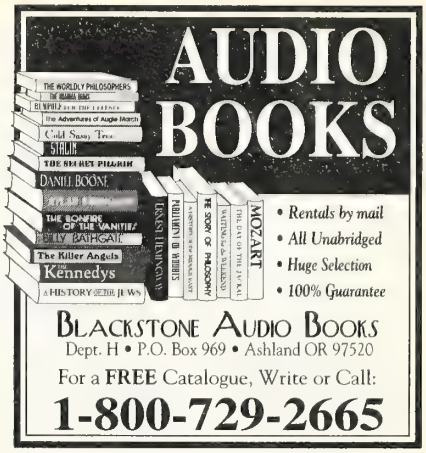
It took considerable effort but he was able to gulp down a last few wallows of gin and edge over away rom the side of the bed. Some of he liquor rolled off her chin, down ier neck, over the satin pillowcase. Her special crystal nightcap goblet ell to the hardwood floor and mashed. Day keeper would find he necklace and sell it. Land her ss in jail.

Shit. Bobby didn't know the first hing about prison. Spent half his ife behind bars and what did he now? She knew what it was like to all back into the darkness. To im-lode nights and come to every norning like reconstituted misery. Come crawling back in the day cell of a puny withering body. She new all about black holes. She new all about prison, about clocks and calendars. She knew single soul-crushing seconds that lasted months of Sundays. She knew second-hand sweeps that were life plus ninety-nine; hours of agony like twenty lifetimes of Methuselah; weeks that tormented like furnace years on the surface of Mercury. All the while thinking "Why me?" and "Poor me." She had heard the silence of the moon reflected in still mountain lakes, and that did not change a thing. Nothing was altered. It was a very bad deal, and then on top of everything else you had to die. *Why has God done this thing to me?*

She had never been up for any of this. Thanks to all of the pills and booze there was, at last, that wonderful sense of detachment. She could take the scissors and cut the cord any time now. Should have done it years ago, but finally the sentence was almost completed.

She blacked out. The sound of a gunshot through the telephone brought her around. God! Bobby!

"Nights in White Satin" was still playing on the CD. She had hit the replay button a dozen times, but you couldn't gauge time that way. The plan called for Mozart but . . . Bobby. Shit, Bobby. He was just a friend, but a friend was a better thing than a lover. More valuable. In the long run take a friend, a really good friend, any day. Maybe it would be like spirits and shit, and she and Bobby would meet and be together again with fresh young healthy bodies. After all, they were checking out together, practically within the same hour. She hoped he had the soul strength to hold it together and wait for her. Some of them just evaporated and disappeared and others turned into angels. How did she know that? Suddenly she knew that. God, what if she ended up in a horrible pile of shit on the other side? An eternal pile of shit? No. The only hell she would ever know was about to end. In fact, it was over. She felt warmth and love. She wondered if there was a heaven. Seemed very likely now, contrary to what common sense had previously deemed. She felt light. She felt warm. It was good. ■



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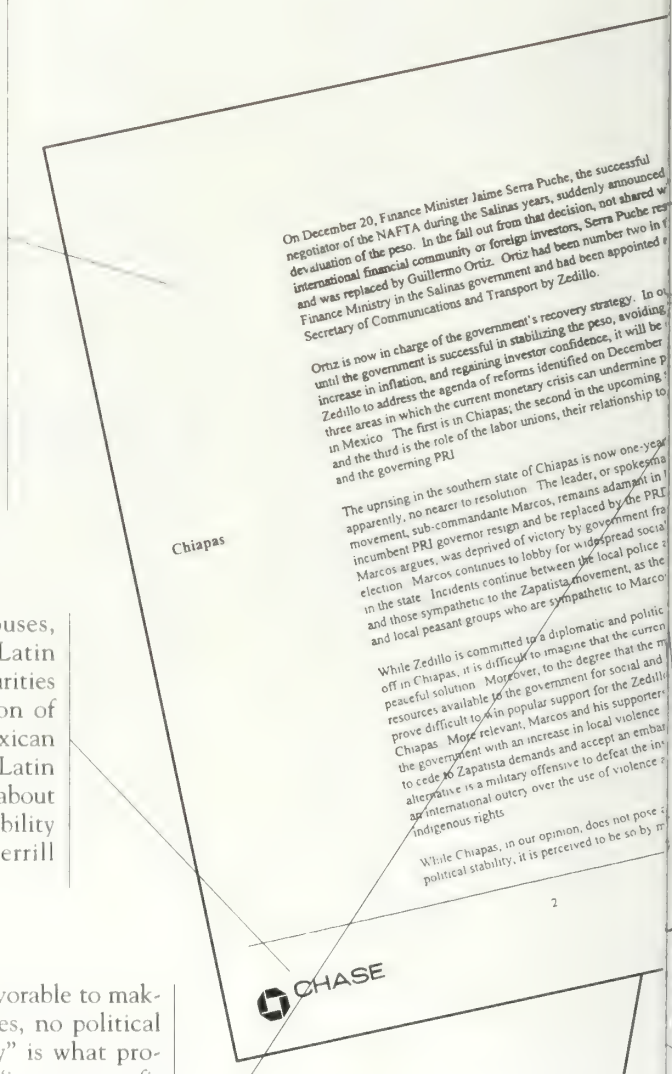
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THE DEMAN

Amid Mexico's crisis, Chase Manhattan calls for po

On January 13, three weeks after the Mexican peso collapsed, the Chase Manhattan Bank's Emerging Markets Group sent a four-page report on Mexico to a group of its top clients. The Mexican economic crisis was threatening one of the hottest "emerging markets"—the term big institutional investors use to describe Third World and Eastern European countries that have deregulated their economies and allowed foreigners to buy domestic stocks and bonds. Panic-stricken, Chase quickly assembled what amounted to Wall Street's program for returning the situation to the status quo ante. Bankers are normally prudent with their utterances on political matters; Chase's unusual frankness here is due to the prospect of huge losses on its Mexican operations. Under these circumstances, Chase issued what amounts to a call for army terror and fixed elections. Not content with dispensing this recipe for Mexican recovery to the bank's rich clients, the report's author, Riordan Roett, briefed every available ear on Capitol Hill, including Senator Bob Dole.


On December 20, Finance Minister Jaime Serra Puche, the successful negotiator of the NAFTA during the Salinas years, suddenly announced devaluation of the peso. In the fall out from that decision, not shared w international financial community or foreign investors, Serra Puche res and was replaced by Guillermo Ortiz. Ortiz had been number two in t Finance Ministry in the Salinas government and had been appointed Secretary of Communications and Transport by Zedillo.

Ortiz is now in charge of the government's recovery strategy. In o until the government is successful in stabilizing the peso, avoiding increase in inflation, and regaining investor confidence, it will be Zedillo to address the agenda of reforms identified on December three areas in which the current monetary crisis can undermine p in Mexico. The first is in Chiapas; the second in the upcoming and the third is the role of the labor unions, their relationship to and the governing PRI

Chiapas

The uprising in the southern state of Chiapas is now one-year apparently, no nearer to resolution. The leader, or spokesma movement, sub-commandante Marcos, remains adamant in incumbent PRI governor resign and be replaced by the PRI Marcos argues, was deprived of victory by government fra election. Marcos continues to lobby for widespread social in the state. Incidents continue between the local police and those sympathetic to the Zapatista movement, as the and local peasant groups who are sympathetic to Marco

While Zedillo is committed to a diplomatic and politic off in Chiapas, it is difficult to imagine that the curren peaceful solution. Moreover, to the degree that the m resources available to the government for social and prove difficult to win popular support for the Zedill Chiapas. More relevant, Marcos and his supporters the government with an increase in local violence to cede to Zapatista demands and accept an embar alternative is a military offensive to defeat the in an international outcry over the use of violence indigenous rights

While Chiapas, in our opinion, does not pose political stability, it is perceived to be so by m

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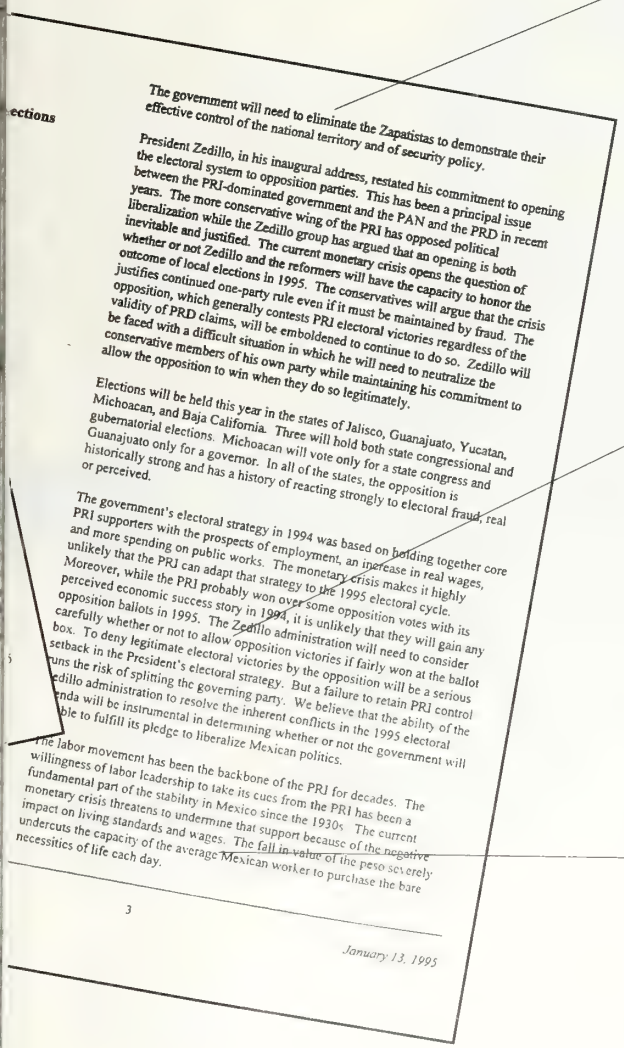
CHASE

Along with other major banks and brokerage houses, Chase has immense sums in play in Mexico and Latin America. It holds about $1.5 billion in Mexican securities and ranks third among U.S. banks in the provision of peso-denominated loans and financial services to Mexican companies. Chase also is deeply involved in other Latin American nations, with a total regional portfolio of about $4.5 billion—thus the bank's abiding fear that instability in one country could spread to others in what Merrill Lynch tremulously calls "the contagion effect."

"Stability" is bankerspeak for conditions favorable to making money: a cowed labor force, low wages, no political threat to the party of property. "Stability" is what promotes that most precious of commodities, "investor confidence," which is now menaced in Mexico by three factors that the Chase memo hastens to identify: the insurgent peasants of Chiapas who first raised the Zapatista banner of revolt on New Year's Day 1994; the awful possibility that democracy in Mexico could be permitted to function, thus disturbing the PRI's one-party dominance; and the dreadful chance that long-docile labor unions would have the effrontery to seek a decent wage for their members.

OF CAPITAL

pression, *by Alexander Cockburn and Ken Silverstein*



ections

The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy.

President Zedillo, in his inaugural address, restated his commitment to opening the electoral system to opposition parties. This has been a principal issue between the PRI-dominated government and the PAN and the PRD in recent years. The more conservative wing of the PRI has opposed political liberalization while the Zedillo group has argued that an opening is both inevitable and justified. The current monetary crisis opens the question of whether or not Zedillo and the reformers will have the capacity to honor the outcome of local elections in 1995. The conservatives will argue that the crisis justifies continued one-party rule even if it must be maintained by fraud. The opposition, which generally contests PRI electoral victories regardless of the validity of PRD claims, will be emboldened to continue to do so. Zedillo will be faced with a difficult situation in which he will need to neutralize the conservative members of his own party while maintaining his commitment to allow the opposition to win when they do so legitimately.

Elections will be held this year in the states of Jalisco, Guanajuato, Yucatan, Michoacan, and Baja California. Three will hold both state congressional and gubernatorial elections. Michoacan will vote only for a state congress and Guanajuato only for a governor. In all of the states, the opposition is historically strong and has a history of reacting strongly to electoral fraud, real or perceived.

The government's electoral strategy in 1994 was based on holding together core PRI supporters with the prospects of employment, an increase in real wages, and more spending on public works. The monetary crisis makes it highly unlikely that the PRI can adapt that strategy to the 1995 electoral cycle. Moreover, while the PRI probably won over some opposition votes with its perceived economic success story in 1994, it is unlikely that they will gain any opposition ballots in 1995. The Zedillo administration will need to consider carefully whether or not to allow opposition victories if fairly won at the ballot box. To deny legitimate electoral victories by the opposition will be a serious setback in the President's electoral strategy. But a failure to retain PRI control runs the risk of splitting the governing party. We believe that the ability of the edillo administration to resolve the inherent conflicts in the 1995 electoral enda will be instrumental in determining whether or not the government will ble to fulfill its pledge to liberalize Mexican politics.

The labor movement has been the backbone of the PRI for decades. The willingness of labor leadership to take its cues from the PRI has been a fundamental part of the stability in Mexico since the 1930s. The current monetary crisis threatens to undermine that support because of the negative impact on living standards and wages. The fall in value of the peso severely undercuts the capacity of the average Mexican worker to purchase the bare necessities of life each day.

3

January 13, 1995

This crucial paragraph manages, in but four lines, to accelerate from traditional boilerplate about stability and investor perceptions to a peremptory demand that the Mexican government deploy its military against the peasants of Chiapas. One paragraph earlier Chase effectively dismisses the alternative solution—social and economic reforms designed to offer a better life to Mexico's poor—on the grounds that such expenditures would be frivolous in the face of the pressing need to pay off investors. Confronted with the word "eliminate," Chase offered the desperate excuse that Roett spoke for himself and not the bank. But less than a month after Chase circulated this document and pressed for its brusque stipulations, President Zedillo unleashed the Mexican army against the Zapatistas in a brief assault, one of whose major purposes appears to have been the display of resolve demanded by Chase and by Wall Street.

This barely muffled call for manipulation of elections should enter business histories as a rare public display of how the captains of capital view the democratic process. As with the demand for use of the military, the stately gravitas of the language increases in direct proportion to the vile nature of the sentiments expressed. Vote fraud has been the PRI's primary method of retaining power during its sixty-six-year reign. President Zedillo's predecessor, Carlos Salinas, it should be remembered, "won" the 1988 election only after a timely breakdown of the electoral computers helped to allow him to overcome the challenge of leftist opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

The fact that economic crisis will make it virtually impossible for "the average Mexican worker to purchase the bare necessities of life" is not in itself dismaying to Chase. What troubles the bank is the possibility (mentioned later in the memo) that, confronted by mass demonstrations by the unemployed, Zedillo might flinch, "yielding to worker demands which [would] further aggravate the economic situation." The memo acknowledges the fact that "Mexican workers still have not recovered the standard of living they had in 1980," but this is not seen as grounds for compassion on the part of the Mexican government. Indeed, as the memo's entire frame of reference acknowledges, conditions deemed favorable by First World bankers invariably mean ruin for Third World populations.

Alexander Cockburn and Ken Silverstein are the editors of CounterPunch, *an investigative newsletter based in Washington, D.C.*

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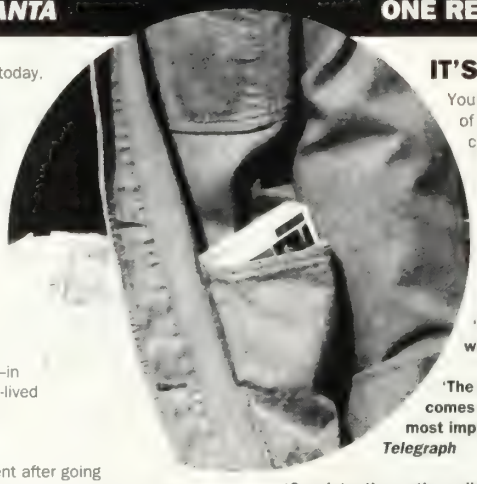
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PRECIOUS DANGERS

The lessons of the motorcycle

By Melissa Holbrook Pierson

There are only two kinds of bikers: those that have been down and those that are going down.

—Biker saying

At precisely this moment someone, somewhere, is getting ready to ride. The motorcycle stands in the cool, dark garage, the air smells of gas and grease. The rider approaches from outside. The light goes on. A flame, everlasting, seems to rise on a piece of chrome. The rider slips leather sleeves down tight on the forearms, pulls the helmet on, buckles the chin strap. Leather gloves with studded palms go on last. The key is slipped into the ignition at the top of the steering head. Then the rider mounts, swinging a leg over the seat. With a push from the thighs, the rider rocks the bike forward once, then again, until it starts to fall forward and down from the center stand. Now the 450 pounds of metal, fluid, and plastic rest in tenuous balance between the rider's legs; if it starts to lean too much to one side, the weight that sits low in a state of grace would suddenly crash to the concrete.

The key is turned; the green and red idiot lights glow. The starter button on the right handlebar, pressed, begins a whirling below. A simultaneous twist of the right grip pulls the throttle cables, and the engine gulps, then roars. Fire is contained within inches of the rider's knees. After a minute the rider feels the engine smoothing down, warming. Later it will be closer to a furnace. The rider pulls in the left-hand lever, then presses down with the left toe. There's a solid *chunk* as first gear engages. The bike moves forward, into a brighter world.



Out in the street there is little traffic, for which the rider is thankful—when on a motorcycle, cars are even more irksome than usual, their slow-motion ways infuriating. The rider shifts into second, this time with the boot toe under the lever. To warm up the tires, the rider shifts in the seat, pressing down on the left handlebar, which makes the bike head left. Then quickly the opposite, then back, then right, until the machine is drawing a sinuous S down the road, the rider dipping right, left, right, left. The higher speed and friction on the entire curve of rubber will heat it so that it adheres better, but the rider is doing this mainly because it feels good, as if the body has usurped the bike and now travels on its own with speed and grace and the promise of power.

The road constantly offers up the possibility of something unexpected around the bend—gravel in a tumult across the road, a car drifting over the yellow line, a dog maddened by the din from the pipes. The rider re-

Melissa Holbrook Pierson is a writer living in New York City.

Photo illustration by William Duke

ceives sensory information from the road and its environs impartially, translating it nearly as quickly into physical response. There is no room in the brain for idle thought (unless on the highway, when idle thoughts appear and float and reconfigure in endless array), and a biker can go for miles and miles without waking up to any sudden realization, including the one that nothing at all has been thought for miles and miles. The faster you ride, the more closed the circuit becomes, deleting everything but this second and the next, which are hurriedly merging. Having no past to regret and no future to await, the rider feels free, though that is hardly true; it's just that here, in this tight, charged world, the other world left behind seems sham, outworn.

The roar under the trees as the machine passes is like the arc of red drawn by a car's taillight in a long-exposure nighttime photograph. It is the ghostly remnant of how the bike cleaved the air and what the rider felt as gravity battled flight upon the rider's body. The curves play games with the rider, and the rider is lost in the concentration it takes to match wits with an impressive opponent. How fast to enter this turn? The fact that you can be sadly mistaken is exactly why the right choice feels so good. Now, with a hundred miles on the clock, the rider has nearly forgotten what it means to sit anywhere but on this machine. The road's painted line, a vanishing point in reverse, is eaten up under the wheels; the wind is a steady reassurance on the chest. This is when the rider becomes susceptible to white-line fever, which feels not so much like a need to continue on forever but like the removal of all options to do anything else. It is simple, maybe: the power to go, the power to stop are reduced to fit in one's hand. The rider, naturally, fears this state. And, keen on the perversity that hides deep in pleasure, the rider, who is me, wants nothing more.

For me it started innocently enough. I was annoyed at being seen as the chick on the back of my boyfriend's exotic Ducati, like a part added to enhance visuals. Besides, I had the prerequisites: a love of speed for its own sake, a need for movement born of unresolved frustration, and the desire to be different, or at least to be seen that way.

And so it begins. You learn the basics of how to ride, make mistakes, learn some more, futz around. Buy a bike and learn to fix it, because fixing it and the accompanying, often temporary, flush of self-sufficiency are part of the allure of motorcycling in this otherwise unfixable world. Go on lots of rides. Grow to love traveling, feeling as though only by moving can you be at rest. Build a world made of maps and dream of using all of them. Slowly, you become a member of a community. You are linked first and most fundamentally to anyone who rides. Then you begin to notice that the motorcycle's variegated proponents form not one but many subcultures. Harley riders talk mainly to one another. Japanese sport-bike riders are mostly looking for thrills. The pilots of the interstates' great land yachts, Gold Wings and Ventures, hang together; the former call themselves "Wingnuts" and their gatherings "Wingdings." BMW owners are generally serious, and some of them are so serious that they have split from the other half of BMW riders, giving the United States two national organizations to choose from—those for whom biking is a way to get to the party, and those for whom biking is the party. Like all bikers, they are unconcerned with what anyone thinks, on one level, and very much concerned with controlling how they are perceived, on another.

Death's minions ride motorcycles. At her bidding, a silent but imperious directive delivered by thought alone, they come for their victim, out from the fog, out from the frame's edge, out from the horizon. The distant roar is heard first, so pale it might only be a fear. It is not so much a warning—death is never escaped, after all—as a musical prelude. Growing insistently louder, the buzz of engines is a drumroll preceding doom. Then the riders blast into sight in the middle distance, blank behind their helmets and goggles and identical leather uniforms, and, of course, dressed in shades of black. As quickly as they appeared, they are off, leaving the body but taking the soul, which is what Death sent them to get, on a wild ride. Death's minions ride motorcycles, at least in Jean Cocteau's *Orphée*. In the case of his helpmeets for Death, the director chose altogether perfectly.

It is possible to feel more alone on a motorcycle than anywhere at rest. Knowing where I can hide if necessary is always on my mind, and where else but on a bike is there someplace truly safe to go? On a bike there are people all around, in a car in the next lane and not five feet away, but they can't get you. You can ride away, alone. You are spared the burden of words, the responsibility of cogent reply. There is so little privacy anywhere these days that this thought feels like the last available comfort, in the absence of knowing there is yet someplace left on earth not contaminated by colonial brick houses or cut through by a new Wal-Mart access road.

There are two bikes in the world that belong to me. One is the so-called real one, which sits in a garage on Union Street in Brooklyn with a rear-drive leak and a clapped-out front suspension begging for new springs. This is the one I've ridden about 35,000 miles on, a 1987 Moto Guzzi Lario: white, two cylinders with four valves per head, small and lean with sixteen-inch wheels front and back, Italian-red rims. This is the bike I've just finished payments on, I've been up to Canada and down to the Gulf Coast on, I wish for the Al-Can highway on. The other bike is what I call the perfect vehicle. This motorcycle is lavish in its gifts and lessons. Sometimes I fear it; often I dream about it; sometimes I long for it as if it were already gone.

Here, now, on the cusp of winter, I walk the sidewalks of Brooklyn and descend into the subway. Down there I walk into an ambush of memory: a peculiar dead end in a coal town in Pennsylvania at dusk a cou-

le of years ago, when, following the ›ute signs to a more familiar road, I ›und myself heading into a deserted ark and up the hill beyond to a emetery. The road ended smack at he burial ground. I turned around nd did it again, just to make certain hadn't misread the signs, which obiously I had. Now there seems omething imperative about that ead end. My mind is filled with it. The purple light at the edge of the ll sky, the dark trees rising up, the road disappearing among the graves.

The first gas-powered motorcycle ›ooked like an instrument of tor›ure—an 1885 vehicle built by Gottieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach ›f Würtemberg, Germany, woodramed, rolling on iron-tired wooden vheels. After Daimler's son Paul ook it on a six-mile ride from Cannstatt to Unterturkheim and ›ack (successful unless you count as nishap the leather-covered saddle catching fire), Daimler abandoned the Einspur (one-track) to get on with his original interest, a four-wheel conveyance. The inventor of the motorcycle is to the rest of the world the father of the automobile.

In the new century motorcycles proliferated. At one time some 300 marques were going at one another on racetracks; by 1927 British manufacturers were putting out 598 different models, and Germany produced more than 151,000 bikes—nearly half the world output—in 1936. There was the Douglas Dragonfly, the Scott Flying Squirrel, the Matchless Silver Arrow, the BSA Rocket Gold Star, various Sunbeams ("The Gentleman's Motor Bicycle"), the Triumph Speed Twins, the Norton Commando, the Vincent Black Shadow, the Velocette Venom, the Ariel Red Hunter, the Royal Enfield Bullet ("made like a gun"). There was the Indian Scout, the Excelsior Deluxe, the Cleveland Century, the Henderson Ace, the Harley-Davidson Electra Glide, the Benelli Tornado, the Morini Settebello, the Gilera Saturno, the Moto Guzzi Falcone. They were cobbled together in backyard sheds or devised in factory studios, not only in Britain, America, Italy, and Japan but in Czechoslovakia, Germany, India, Spain, Scandinavia, Belgium, China. Many of this wild variety were named for things that fly, attack, show agility, or otherwise impress, and the names reek of advertising's peculiarly wishful derring-do. Then again, the hype had its reason. The motorcycle offered an artificially enhanced potency, a sort of stab at immortality: these man-made creations were constructed so that on them we could forget the sadness of not having been born this mighty. In other words, although we made them, they make us fly.

It was also significant that T. E. Lawrence met his end on one of his beloved Brough Superiors. (He named his bike Boanerges and loved to ride it flat out for pure speed, and

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sometimes to race a fighter plane flying overhead.) This is the man who was one of Colin Wilson's exemplary "outsiders" in his book of the same name, of whom he said, "His clear-sighted intellect could not conceive of moral freedom without physical freedom too; pain was an invaluable instrument in experiments to determine the extent of his moral freedom."

After World War II some alienated veterans came home to ride motorcycles in angry bunches, giving birth to the myth and the reality of gangs like the Hell's Angels. But after a short boom, even Indian Motocycle failed, leaving Harley the only U.S. maker. Incidents such as the 1947 biker riot in Hollister, California, in which 407 were arrested after police counterattacked with tear gas, spiced the era. The stinger that the biker riots left behind was in the movies, starting with *The Wild One* (1953), based on the Hollister episode, starring Marlon Brando as a rebel without a cause and Mary Murphy as a good girl who naughtily reports of her first ride: "It's fast— it scared me—but it felt good." Although *Easy Rider* (1969) had a more sympathetic view of its chopper-riding heroes, the feeling was not shared by many people over thirty. The dozens of murder 'n' mayhem flicks that appeared in the Sixties and Seventies (*Hell's Angels on Wheels, Born Losers, Satan's Sadists*) left a mark that has been hard to remove, reducing "biker" to "bad guy."

The ethos of the Fifties—the conformity, cleanliness, safety, and impersonal modernity that helped wash away the residue of war—could not embrace motorcycling. But it made a brief return in the 1970s, as the result of the Mideast oil crisis, a back-to-nature movement, and one determined visionary, Soichiro Honda. His first test model, which arrived in the United States in 1958, was greeted with skepticism and disregard. But he soon proved the superiority of his motorcycles, and his pocketbook, on European racetracks in the face of equal disdain. He also had a knack for giving people what they wanted before they knew they wanted it. By building small, unintimidating scooter-like "tiddlers," Honda easily hooked a new generation, who could then move up to faster models. Sales boomed, reaching 525,000 in 1982. Then, in Reagan's time, yearly bike sales free-fell to 178,000.

Biking has long welcomed the disenfranchised because no one else would have them, and because even outsiders must come inside sometimes. Wearing gang colors, iron crosses, and riding a Harley with straight pipes that amplify the blatting of a 45-degree V-twin engine to an all but unbearable pitch is as concise a way as any to tell the world you're pissed off and that you reserve the right to broadcast the news widely. The individuals who *look* like they might belong to gangs and who occasionally collect to proclaim their independence from family values (and at the same time show themselves to be the far right's great champions with a rampant buy-American, anti

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immigrant, misogynist conservatism) have merely adopted certain regalia and behavior (causing many to wonder just what it is about a Harley-Davidson that causes men to put on great weight in the midriff and grow unkempt beards). During the week they are your car's mechanic, a forklift operator, a factory worker—the glorious, righteous proletariat. On the weekend they like to drink a bit to forget that they are the proletariat and to reassure themselves that everything is in its proper place ("Show your tits, baby!" they yell, or shell out twelve bucks for a T-shirt that reads "Hitler European Tour 1939–1945"). In the public imagination they are tattooed hellions, one step up from animals, acting out the antisocial rage of an entire nation.

But some of the alienation is real. Many of these men saw firsthand in Vietnam what an adventure the military can be. Unwilling to believe they had narrowly escaped the mortars and mines to which their friends succumbed only to return to less than the American dream, they found themselves wishing for more—a just cause, some reason to keep going, a resuscitation of the dead, all those terrible dead. Every Memorial Day they roar into Washington, D.C., thousands and thousands of Hondas and Kawasakis and Harleys in low gear, decked and flapping with American flags and the black emblem of their only hope, the POW/MIA flag. To my mind this is not a gang; this is the dark wave from the bottom waters that has always buoyed America's more colorful toy boats on its surface.

I've encountered these men at rallies and races, and their sordid requests wear me down and rile me up. I think I should have the right to go where I want and do as I please as unmolested as these men demand to be. I have seen the women who acquiesce, seen them turn and raise their shirts to a grandstand of thousands at the races, or ride on the back of a bike through a resort town bare-breasted and waving. I've been told they are having fun. But I have looked into their eyes when their mouths were smiling. And I believe I know humiliation when I see it.

Once, trying to be the reporter I was never meant to be, I may have put myself in danger by breaching Animal Hill at the annual race weekend in Laconia, New Hampshire. Although I was accompanied by male friends, they let me know that under no circumstances were they stopping in the midst of that sadists' heaven, the general aura of which was expressed by an inflatable love doll hung by the neck from a tree, every rubber orifice violated by whiskey bottles. Black smoke snaked to the sky from the embers of a burned Japanese motorcycle, a stolen truck, bits and pieces of furniture, and trees. Men stripped to the waist, some still bearing the mud they had fallen into the night before and stayed in till morning, lurched around, and beer was still appearing by the case on the backs of motorcycles slipping up the sodden trail. I heard that any woman who dared to spend the night up there would have to consider herself the property of all.

I felt faintly sick at witnessing such desperation masquerading as fun. "Shit Happens" is the credo of men such as these, and they wear it on their chests and holler it to the sky. It is both what they believe has happened to them—nothing but shit—and an abdication of personal responsibility.

Still, I acknowledge the fascination we have with excess, and how it appeals to our belief that humans are capable of anything. The outlaw biker is also a straightforward object of envy, in a peculiarly American style: animate the chrome and steel, turn back time a hundred years, and you have (what we imagine to be) the frontiersman on his tough little mustang, riding hell-bent for leather from danger or to it, a law unto himself in a lawless land. Bikes say: I am fast, faster than any pain you'd like to escape. Together, the motorcyclists I know are all busily painting in their own corner of the total work known as unhappiness; I'm working on it, too.

Danger is really the wind that passes on either side of a motorcycle. You may go for long periods of time without feeling it there, hours or

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days or weeks or months of nothing but routine and happy riding, then it chooses one minute to remind you it's there, and the news is stunning, although it's been there all along. There is a registry of risk carried in a mental file, the things that to a car mean nothing but to a bike sing like a siren: wet leaves, gravel, sand, off-camber roadway, painted lines, tar patches liquefying in the sun, oil deposits at the gas station or tollbooth, metal plates and manhole covers made deadly by rain, potholes, a series of bumps ready to claim the steering head and send the bars into a tank-slapping ricochet from which there may be no recovery.

Sometimes motorcyclists themselves try to deny the dangers, as they do when they wear shorts or bare heads. Or they claim never to have felt fear, only joy; they can certainly get testy, some of them, if you mention the word, as if saying "fear" brings it on. But somewhere they all know that the possibility of danger, and the possibility of mastering it, is why they ride.

What can be truly fun that does not remind us of danger? What could make us feel alive that doesn't remind us of death? Riding a bike is corollary to those pursuits that never feel so good as when you stop doing them. Notwithstanding the fact that hanging around the house is the single most dangerous activity in America—what with ladders, bathtubs, lethal cleansers, and hedge clippers all close at hand—one could stay in the living room for most of one's life and feel exquisitely safe.

I wonder, in fact, whether as a nation we are in the midst of an explosion of fear. Children are no longer allowed the elementary joy of getting hurt. Twenty years ago the most sought-after piece of equipment on the playground was the spinning platform with iron handholds; commandeered by the strongest and oldest, it gave the weaker and smaller their first lessons in natural selection. As it went twirling on its dizzy way, never stopping, it presented a problem when the eventual desire to get off arose. Around and around it went, while you gathered yourself about you, trying to determine the safest point at which to dismount. None was forthcoming, so you closed your eyes and jumped. The sand came up to grab you in a thumping embrace, biting into knees and elbows. You learned to roll. Now such contraptions have been outlawed. Meanwhile, in this increasingly safe world, some of us guard our precious dangers more closely than before. If you continue to ride in the full knowledge that you could lose your life in so doing, then you are asking not for death but for immortality.

Sometimes the fear is retroactive. When I am at home, suddenly I find myself in a rush that resembles the traffic I rode through before, but it is transformed into a dense nightmare. How did I dodge those cars, I think, with them pursuing me as close as inches? How is it my front wheel narrowly avoided the back license plate of a Buick? Or I dream of elaborate malfunctions: riding on a bike that is both mine and terribly strange, with controls that disappear and seats that grow too tall and headlights that cut out in the dark.

I would do well to remember how Cervantes put this creeping affliction: "Fear has many eyes and can see things underground." In other words, looking for trouble, I might find it. I have actually spent days procrastinating, worrying, making excuses for not going for a ride; then I give myself a decent push, and not half a block away from the garage I'm already smiling behind my helmet. Somewhere in me I know I will take the inevitable spill. The odds are with me on this one. I hope I will be let down easily when the time comes.

The legend of the motorcycle rider as rabble-rouser has remained into the Nineties, but in a transformed state. The miscreant's sidekick now helps sell a $12,000 beaded bustie on a magazine cover or becomes the theme of a New York tourist-trap burger joint (replete with rigged Harleys that vibrate and smoke for the patrons). The motorcycle, as a succinct image of power at once awe

some and threatening, is ideal for advertising's purposes, particularly at a time when the will to buy has generally replaced the will to do.

Once in this picture, however, limited to a role as semaphore or backdrop, the denatured bike suddenly ceases to be a bike at all. Its new fantasy world has been carefully arranged. It is a world in which eternal suaveness, animal appeal, hipness—at bottom, immortality—is frozen into permanent availability by the lens. To enter its safe precincts, the viewer need only amass all the props and re-create the scene. People who have no intention of ever riding a bike sport black leather jackets, the more zippers and buckles the better, and knockoff engineer boots à la Brando. In fact, actually riding a bike would intrude on this dream, introduce incorrigible reality to a bargain struck precisely to banish reality's impermanence, uncertainty, failure. Nowhere is the reminder that the only purpose those togs originally had was to prevent severe skin abrasions or crushed foot bones in an accident. The real item for sale in the ads for motorcyclish goods is a sensation of pure magic: you get to feel like a rugged individualist while also becoming socially and sexually acceptable to a wide pool that shares the same standard of style. Reduced to a charm on the bracelet of fashion, motorcycles become safe for consumption while lending a sense of false danger to the riskless proceedings. Their appearance has no lasting effect except, like junk food, to provoke a hunger for more. Like holograms, they radiate their alluring substancelessness onto every surface. Near the end of the motorcycle's first century, actual motorcycles become fewer and fewer while the tidy simulations of them proliferate. Motorcycles are everywhere today, and the hand can pass right through them.

When you ride, you travel light You take along what is in your stomach, on your back, and whatever fits into the tank bag between the tools and the rain gear, all of which you will need sooner or later, especially the electrical tape. At some point

Continued on page 78

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Arab-Moslem Fanaticism and Intransigence

Are *they* the root cause of Mid-East turmoil?

For the last five decades, the world has been convinced, mostly because of unrelenting Arab propaganda, that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is the root cause of the constant turmoil in the Middle East and that Israel should make "concessions" to the Arabs. But is that the *real* reason for the turmoil and for the violence? Or is there another much deeper, more fundamental reason behind it?

What are the facts?

■ We Americans are reluctant to criticize or even to discuss the religions of others. We consider it a very personal matter. but the profound hatred of the Moslem Arab world against the West, especially against the United States (the"Great Satan") and Israel (the "Little Satan") can only be explained by trying to comprehend the psychology and the principal religious tenets of Islam. Islam is a world-wide religion, but it originated in Arabia and it survives in Arabia in its purest form unaffected by any outside influences. The policies of the Arab countries are totally dominated by Islam. Islam believes itself to be in possession of the holy truth. In the name of that truth, any act of violence is permitted, sanctioned and encouraged. It is perhaps only with that understanding that the acts of savagery, the suicide bombers in Israel, the bombing of the World Trade Center and other acts of murderous fanaticism all over the world can be explained.

■ For the first six centuries after the Moslems spilled forth from the Arabian peninsula, they conquered much of the then known world. The Arab Moslems did in their ascendancy indeed give rise to a substantial civilization. But then, beginning with their expulsion from Spain, a long decline set in that lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. That decline was the more bitter, the more frustrating, because it was inflicted by the hated and despised "infidels". It was something that had to be remedied by whatever means. Injured pride had to be salved; the enemies who caused this intolerable humiliation and this painful injury had to be destroyed.

■ The 20th century brought national independence to the Arab states. Two other fundamental events occurred: 1) The discovery of the world's largest oil deposits under the Arabian peninsula, and 2) The creation, in 1948 of the state of Israel, which ever since its birth has been the concentrated focus of the hatred and venom of all Moslem Arabs, a hatred that unites them, that even surpasses their hatreds against each other, and that has launched them into five disastrous wars against Israel. Even the rape of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was explained as being a step towards the "liberation of Palestine", a claim so bizarre, so patently absurd that it can only be comprehended and given credence by a mind obsessed with the ideology of Arab Islam.

■ The obsession of the Moslem Arabs with Israel is totally irrational. To have Israel, an advanced highly civilized Western outpost, as an independent country in the middle of the Arab-Moslem world is utterly intolerable to them. That is the reason that, making allowance for the very cold peace with Egypt and the recently concluded peace with Jordan, the 21 Arab states, among them the richest countries in the world, with a combined population of more than 200 million and with a land area greater than that of the U.S., have since the beginning of the century concentrated obsessive ferocity by military, economic, ideological, political, diplomatic, and any other means to destroy the tiny Jewish community of Palestine, and its successor, the Jewish state of Israel—only 4 million people, in a country just one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The recent events in the United States, Argentina and England have sobered many who had believed the Israel-Palestinian conflict to be the cause for the unrest in the Middle East. The fact is that war is endemic in the Arab world and that the Moslem Arabs have been waging war against each other and against their non-Arab neighbors for centuries. But, as much as the Moslem Arabs hate each other, most of them are united in their greater hatred against the "infidel Jews" and their tiny country, and they have built vast war machines for the ultimate "jihad" to chase the Jews into the sea. The insincere focus on the Palestinian plight is designed to divert attention from the many domestic problems and inter-Arab conflicts, and to direct the Moslem Arab frustration against Israel, the "infidel Western outsider". The suggestion that Israel divest itself from its historic heartland, the 2,362 sq. mi, "West Bank" and from the Golan Heights would be a step toward its strategic suicide. The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of still most of the Arab Moslem states to destroy Israel, their inability to come to terms with its very existence. That hatred and that intolerance are fueled by Arab-Moslem fanaticism and intransigence and unwillingness to accept diversity in the region. Only when that will be overcome can peace and tranquility finally come to the Middle East.

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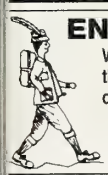
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Continued from page 75

you will throw your gloves to the ground in exasperation. Something's broken. But here's the strange relief: you've got to fix it. You discover that you brought your wits along too, those rusty mechanisms that work on old-fashioned principles, wherein you can see the crankshaft turn and the chains progress and the up, down, up, down of levers and legs. For this brief time, you get to forget the maddening prevalence of faxes, computers, and other shiny boxes you cannot get inside of, and you become the scavenger the gods of old intended you to be. Sink your teeth into this one, the silent motorcycle says; go ahead, see if that bottle cap by your feet will be of use. Of course, it is a relief only in retrospect, and you may not even know it's come, because it is applied directly to your soul.

No matter how treacherous it is, I love riding in the rain. It is so lulling. Sound is slurred by the water. Breath fogs the view from inside, and when you crack the shield open a bit to dispel the moisture, rain pelts your lips. Your hands feel strangely distant on the controls. What's going on out there seems a million miles away, though it's on top of you, and driving at you, and kicked up behind you in an arcing stream from the rear wheel. If you're riding at night, both perils and isolation are intensified: the headlights of cars coming toward you refract and brighten to a glare on your face shield; the buffeting wind coming off the passing vehicles pushes you sideways for a moment, and all you can do is hold on. Perhaps that's the source of comfort—the lack of alternatives. Life simplified at long last.

The little lights of the instrument panel in the greater dark put me in mind of a tiny spaceship floating surely through a benighted universe of unfathomed spread. The headlight glances off the slick leaves at the edge of the road, and what is beyond that quick beam waits there for you to arrive upon it and briefly launch it into existence before consigning it back to what is behind in the black. With the dampened sound, thoughts become louder. The only thing beside yourself that you can hear, somewhere beneath you, is a steady hum of engine. It is all there is to keep you anchored to the world. All the rest, all the earth, is rain.

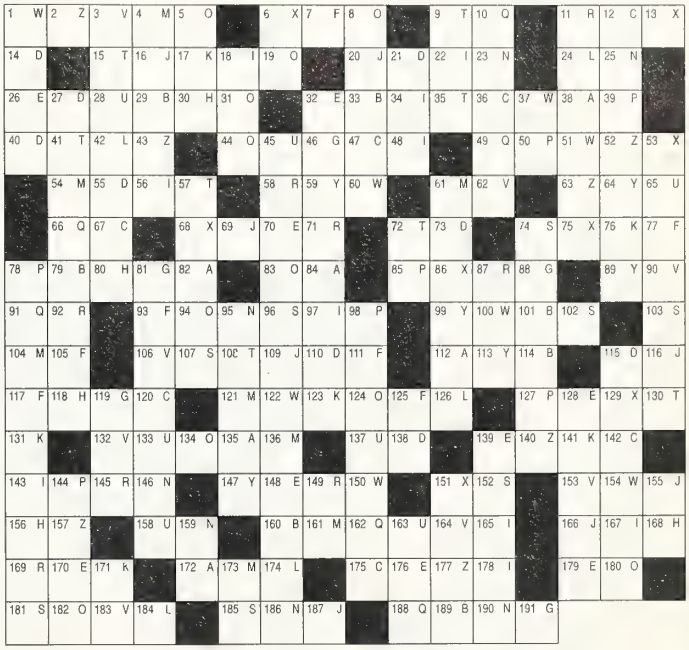
This is so untroubled a state of affairs that sometimes catatonia overtakes me, in spite of all the ways I try to remind myself about the dangers of believing what it is convenient to believe. I recall riding up the New Jersey Turnpike in a dead rain near midnight on a Sunday, the traffic as unceasing as the storm. I had been doing sixty in the same lane for what seemed like forever. Then I needed to change. I did it as I had dozens of times before on this same road when it was dry. This time, crossing the lane divider and those handy little reflectors put there for the safety of cars, my rear wheel met the plastic and for a second spun. This was in that class of events that are simple and quick, so immediate they seem to precede their own loss; it happens when your foot slips in a dream and thus makes a cliff appear. For a mile or two my heart was near my gullet, thinking about all the possibilities that could have been realized. I'd like to say that for the rest of the ride I was more careful, and I probably was to the degree that anyone can manage life's risks, but I still couldn't begin the accounting of everything that hadn't occurred to me yet, the list that, once mastered, would deliver me from evil. There is so much that must remain incalculable.

Does this all sound like a rhapsody? I both mean it to and don't. Joyful as it is to have the throttle under your hand, moving through light and shadow seemingly unfettered, I think there are other, more subterranean reasons to love and desire these machines. Motorcycles red-flag fear, calling it out from its dark hiding place. They let us shadowbox with fear, give it the old cathartic heave-ho. Play at it for its purgative powers, like tragedies on the stage. And they give us another chance to remind ourselves that it's all temporary and fragile. This is a perverse gift, but a true one. Knowing it, we lean into the turn and hang on tight. ■

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 149

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 64.



CLUES

A. Divination — 172 38 82 112 135 84

B. Wastes time, dawdles — 79 189 29 101 114 33 / 160

C. Deals, sells — 175 12 67 142 36 47 120

D. Uncontrolled or unrestricted by law — 27 110 40 55 115 138 21 73 / 14

E. Obstructing, blocking (2 wds.) — 139 176 26 179 128 170 32 148 / 70

F. "The ____ of Ice Cream" (1923 Wallace Stevens poem) — 117 77 93 111 105 125 7

G. Unadorned — 81 46 191 119 88

H. County, N. Scotland — 30 168 80 118 156

I. "A man he seems of cheerful ____" (Wordsworth, "The Excursion") — 165 18 97 56 178 167 143 34 / 22 48

J. Eject, discard (2 wds.) — 166 116 187 155 20 69 109 16

K. Am. writer (1848–1908), creator of Uncle Remus — 17 76 131 141 123 171

L. Equip; furnish, as with a gift — 184 126 174 24 42

M. Drenching rain — 136 104 54 173 121 61 161 4

N. Strivings — 95 159 25 186 190 146 23

O. Manual labor (2 wds.) — 5 94 83 134 44 31 19 8 / 182 124 180

P. One who goes about stealthily — 78 127 144 85 39 98 50

Q. Good dog Tray "has no time to say, '____!'" (hyph.; Hoffman, "Cruel Frederick") — 162 66 49 188 10 91

R. Mouselike rodents of Norway, Sweden, etc. — 87 71 149 11 169 145 58 92

S. Rich — 96 185 103 181 107 102 152 74

T. "They said, 'If you ____ boil eggs in your shoes . . .'" (2 wds., Lear, "100 Nonsense . . . Rhymes") — 35 57 15 41 9 130 108 72

U. Skill for a particular activity (hyph.) — 28 65 158 163 45 137 133

V. Does something rapidly or casually — 183 3 164 62 132 90 106 153

W. "Stars in the purple dusk above the ____" (Aiken, "Senlin, Morning Song") — 154 122 51 37 1 100 150 60

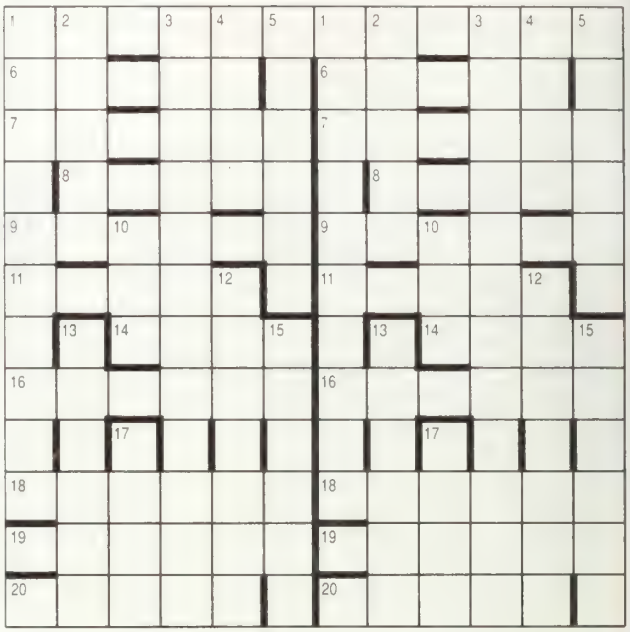
X. Reaching a stopping place — 6 75 68 86 129 151 13 53

Y. Louisianans descended from Nova Scotians — 89 59 147 64 99 113

Z. Cavaliers — 177 52 140 63 2 157 43

News Clippings—IV

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli
(with acknowledgments to Stephen Sondheim)



Solvers of this month's puzzle are hereby advised to think 1 Across.

Each "clipping" consists of two separate clues, leading to separate answers, the lengths of which are indicated by the numbers in parentheses. One answer is to be entered in the right side of the diagram, one in the left: the solver must discover, in each case, which goes where. Within each "clipping" the two clues never overlap, nor are there any unnecessary words bridging them, but either the right or left clue may come first. The "headlines" in small capital letters are included just for fun; they are not part of the clues and should be ignored.

Answers include one proper name; 6 Across includes a variant spelling.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 64.

ACROSS

1. *See instructions* (12)
6. TAKEOVER BIDS RISE: Year, for example, of recession creates one old-fashioned battleground and is for many an upset (5,5)
7. CULT FIGURE ARRESTED: "De Lawd," dancing in drag, found, carted off (6,6)
8. NETWORK CONTROVERSY SETTLED: Partly risqué top-rated TV show gets unorthodox tear sheet items in hand (5,5)
9. APPLICATION APPROVED: Polish outfit drills, etc. right angle in motion ruling (3,3;6)
11. AUTOMATED NURSERY UNVEILED: Custom-develop first American crib with high fidelity (5,5)
14. CRYPTIC SUCCESS STORY: Puzzle-maker, by leaving drink to get a divorce, has comeback—but there's catch (4,4)
16. DESPERATELY SEEKING LOVE: I'm a girl, mostly forward-looking, chubby product of Italian pride, with heart—in need of gentleman on the rebound (6,6)
18. UFO SIGHTING: Cunning little creature from outer space takes one in last month before fire in formerly French city (6,6)
19. PUBLISHING FIASCO: Holds back tours about *Mark of Zorro*. Wild tale gets low mark. Get it if you want a nap (6,6)
20. DEFUNCT MAGAZINE REVIVES: Morbid collectors (short females, relatively speaking) like no longer functioning back issue of *Fall Gardens* (5,5)

DOWN

1. POVERTY STATISTICS RELEASED: Poor said to be put down following discrimination—and it stays with you (10,10)
2. PEACE TALKS CONTINUE: Recently hostile Muslim and Catholic rebels question one wrong act—with English it's a piece of cake (5,5)
3. SENATE SCANDAL BARED: Teddy pants perhaps beneath dress proper—there's not a second to realize or perform a disheartening act! (12,12)
4. OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD DISCOVERED: Cleaners' hearing is still real sick breathing problem (4,4)
5. PRISON TORTURE REVEALED: Ordered people to cross leg, cry, make the sounds of little old lady who sings high! (6,6)
10. MENTAL PATIENT FOUND: Run-away from Bedlam, having no place to sleep, received dress-up (3,3)
12. PONTIFF VISITS WALL STREET: Permitted to enter Stock Exchange—in return, calls up Holy Master who converts one often caught in the rat race (7,7)
13. STAR SIGNED: Guarantee in pen that *Look Back in Anger* actress sign for times in productions of *Hair* and *Cats*. (6,6)
15. SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN ARRESTED: Having beer around ten, parts of screens fly during put-together of three sets (6,6)
17. ROBBERY PROVOKES MEDIA FRENZY: Some jazz initially surrounds jewel thief Galatea's beloved one, exactly as written up (4,4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "News Clippings—IV," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Smart Set," are Jean A. Kennison, Westport, Massachusetts; Christine Month, Stony Brook, New York; and J. Porter Henry Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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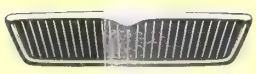
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LETTERS

Recycled Bombast?

In his essay "Reactionary Chic" [March], Lewis Lapham applies his usual acuity and wit to the depredations of the rich, the political right, and the powerful. Yet his major conceit, that the current rhetoric of the right "recycles" that of the 1960s counterculture, is atypically shallow, confounding superficial similarities of form with more meaningful differences of content. As follows:

1) William Bennett's slogan "Empower America" in no way corresponds to Huey Newton's "Power to the people." Bennett calls for a recrystallization of language and values that consciously disempowers most of the population. The "habits of mind" that generated these two slogans are not "identical" but opposed.

2) As Lapham himself asserts and demonstrates, complaints about the "liberal news media" are "absurd." Complaints about liberal Washington, liberal justice, liberal economics, etc., are equally absurd. The fact is, the only "establishment" is the conservative establishment, which possesses the money and power to continually shore up its hegemony. The Sixties "Days of Rage" were a protest against brutality, but right-wing reaction to contemporary cultural disintegration (*dérapage*) serves only to support those very forces of destruction.

3) "The salvation of private individuals." The right's call for "personal responsibility" is in no similar to the Sixties call for "sonal awareness." It represents n deepening of understanding b self-serving freezing out of oth To compare the two is to man late mere syntactic similarity w out acknowledging important di ences of intent.

4) "Romantic arcadianism." commune movement was a life the-line enactment of the searc authenticity. *The Whole Earth C log* was about "access to tools" which to create understanding, s change, and a meaningful, ecolo life. The yuppie catalogues are i way analogous. They support, ra than challenge, the capitalist st quo and encourage a lifestyle of destructive consumption.

5) Religion. Are the Chris sentiments of peace and carin expressed by William Sloane fin and the civil disobedienc the Berrigans, truly analogou the rigid, self-righteous, punis thrust of the religious right? cry of oppressed peoples—"F dom now!"—was not about prettiest girls" belonging to adventurous and strong"; it about compassion and justice a sense of "the fierce urgenc now." Yet, as Lapham so clearl ticulates, demands for free from the prosperous right do in call for the "freedom to go plu ing through a world in which best-looking real estate belon the . . . adventurous and stro What a difference!

In short, Lapham's assertio analogy seem profoundly false possibly destructive. The valu the Sixties—authenticity, con

Harper's Magazine welcomes Letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Letters must be typed double-spaced; volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

ity, justice, and a sense of the possibility of change—will play a role in the evolution of the world, or there likely will not be a world. They do not deserve such destructive criticism.

Marc Estrin
Burlington, Vt.

Lewis Lapham is too kind when he compares the Nineties right with the Sixties left, because the Sixties left never obtained the power that the right has today. It is more accurate to compare today's Congress with the Congress of the McCarthy era, when fear of Communism was used to gain power (à la McCarthy himself). Instead of being told to fear Communists, we are now cajoled into believing that "liberal thinking" is evil and has no merit.

The Nineties right has its own Walter Winchell in Rush Limbaugh, who makes great sums of money by belittling and ridiculing anyone with a new idea, and who proves over and over that it is easier to hate than to understand.

I am not old enough to remember the McCarthy era, but I feel that the zeitgeist must have been similar: much rancor, misinformation, and innuendo creating an environment in which it was not prudent to speak out against such tactics. Even President Eisenhower was not inclined to criticize McCarthy publicly.

It is surprising to live long enough to see that history does indeed repeat itself. One can only wonder who will be hurt this time around.

Gerald Sparks
Westland, Mich.

In this era of concoction, deception, fabrication, and self-serving reporting, Lewis Lapham's analysis of the prevailing political situation is a breath of fresh air and a testimony to intelligent and honest journalism.

Lapham articulates the Republican obfuscations and mean-spirited connivings that soon will wound the American people. The vicious right shifting its focus from "anti-poverty" to "anti-poor," and from protection of the fragile environment to protection of the environment's despoilers. Lapham describes this dynamic with amazing precision.

M. Michael Sigel
Pembroke Pines, Fla.

Lewis Lapham's essay deserves not only kudos but study. The most succinct and telling sentence of the essay clearly identifies the "problem" with the state of our nation: "Here were the people who owned most of what was worth owning in the country (the banks and business corporations as well as the television networks and most of the members of Congress) pretending that they were victims of a conspiracy raised against them by the institutions that they themselves controlled." Here Lapham is not suggesting that all business and political enterprise is corrupt but rather that in the United States, corporate enterprise and government unquestionably hold the reins of power and wealth, and are thus the primary instruments of any real change.

In one sense, the real tragedy of this country is that corporate enterprise has learned so little about the successful development and maintenance of a society, especially one as richly diverse as ours. Too much of corporate America believes that capitalism and profit seeking confer an abdication of social responsibility.

In the United States, hubris is perhaps our greatest sin: we don't really think we have much to learn from anyone else. Concerning Lapham's commentary on the current state of morality, I am reminded of a line from Bernard Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*. Don Juan argues with Doña Ana about "chastity" in much the same way Pat Schroeder might discuss unwed mothers with Newt Gingrich. He remarks: "Twelve lawful children born by one highly respectable lady to three different fathers is not impossible nor condemned by public opinion. That such a lady may be more law abiding than the poor girl whom we used to spurn into the gutter for bearing one unlawful infant is no doubt true; but dare you say she is less self-indulgent?"

Or as Mark Twain noted—perhaps he had the Republicans in mind—"nothing needs reforming so much as other people's habits."

Joseph Ehrenberg
Chicago

Men's Room

One of the parallels observed by Lewis Lapham between the radical Sixties left and the reactionary Nineties right is principled opposition to the passage of time. In comparing the "revolutionary pretensions" of the privileged right with the children of oligarchy, however, Lapham would have been well-advised to review the content of his own magazine.

Of all the articles, Readings, and puzzles in the March issue, all but three credited authors are men. Those articles without credits concern subject matter exclusively male—male murderers, male judge, male poet's needs, a pitch to Pop to buy guns, and "No More Mr. White Guy."

The advances of women in the Congress during the thirty years covered by Lapham's essay are ignored in *Harper's Magazine*. The six Republicans in the forum are male; a congressman's wife offers fashion advice in Readings; and aside from a short poem, the only entry in the entire issue written by a woman is a mindless groupie letter to a male author. As Lapham's essay and his magazine reveal, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Thomas Leeds
Las Vegas, Nev.

Republicans, Half-Baked

While the Republican Forum, "A Revolution, or Business as Usual?" [March], was served up "over lamb filet and crab cakes," the six participants seemed to be cooking up their own nefarious concoction; I'll call it "Recipe for Hypocrisy."

Step 1. Start with a good stock of assumptions about the poor not wanting to work. Toss in a strong dash of contempt for inner-city black youth. Step 2. Turn a blind eye to the gross military expendi-



We are pleased
to announce that
Harper's Magazine
has received the
National Magazine Award
in the category of
Essays & Criticism
for three of
Lewis H. Lapham's
Notebook columns:

Robber Barons Redux
(January 1994)

Morte de Nixon
(July 1994)

Terms of Endearment
(September 1994)

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HARPER'S
MAGAZINE

tures of the United States. (Make sure to ignore its components of socialized medicine and its many unnecessary activities that could only be described as Workfare.) Step 3. Stir in some denial from the religious right about their attraction to government (abortion counseling, anyone?). Step 4. Half-bake it, garnish with a touch of insight about the Republican priorities of symphonies over suffering, and serve it with a smile.

No matter how you dress it up, it's still slop. I'll eat elsewhere.

Matthew Adams
Carrboro, N.C.

As the six participants in the Republican Forum sought to conjure new itineraries for American government, they brought to mind the words of Marie Antoinette's dressmaker, who said, "There is nothing new except what is forgotten." The bulk of ideas presented by the Republicans is nothing more than repackaged trickle-down Reaganomics. During the 1980s, the working poor were ditched, the middle class was shunted to the slow lane, and the upper class was given all the green lights. An American nightmare—predicated on a disinterred social Darwinism or visions of Versailles—was sold to us as the American dream. But not again. How dare anyone in public office speak of "values" and "sacrifice" without the least intention of involving him- or herself in the character-building process? I would welcome truly conservative government. Let's begin with integrity, fairness, and the pursuit of the public good over personal gain. The oldest and best form of leadership is by example.

Mel Zaloudek
River Grove, Ill.

In the March Forum, Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, calls for the Republican Party to send a dramatic political message to the American people by abolishing an important government agency. He states: "The Legal Services Corporation . . . would be a great one to cut." In his unsee eagerness to deny poor Americ equal access to the justice syst Reed is either uninformed or un ing about the thousands of pe helped by Legal Services advoc across the country every day: ten facing eviction and homelessness ders facing illegal ejection from n ing homes, abused women and c dren seeking safety, and veter needing services and benefits. R suggestion reflects, one hopes, isolated misunderstanding of fu mental American ideals rather t a party-wide plan to deprive pe of access to justice simply bec they cannot pay for it.

Faye B. Rachlin
Springfield, Mass.

I am a wheat and potato far and the crops I have the most d culty selling are the crops that subsidized. As a true believer in free market, I am convinced t government policies are the sourc my problems. So when Forum pa ipant William Kristol suggests farm subsidies are one place to government spending, I hope it h pens. However, Kristol and the p elists who concur with him fa consider all the facts involved. example, the current levels of g ernment farm subsidies are subs tially lower than they were in 1 If every sector of government sp ing had received the same pro tional decreases over the last years, the federal budget would be balanced.

One must also remember that farm program allows American f ers to be on market parity with o countries. Worldwide applicatio the same technology allow a far in South America to raise whe cheaply as a farmer in the Amer Midwest. However, if the labor environmental standards are not ulated, the final costs to the farm South America are less. Most o countries subsidize their farmer our government does not cou with direct subsidies, American f ers will have their market bought

Continued on pa

NOTEBOOK

Jefferson on toast

By Lewis H. Lapham

Westforth Communications
1340 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10019

April 20, 1995

arold Goldenson
urora Pictures
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ear Harry,

During the intermission of the oppard play at Lincoln Center on uesday night, Susan Stanton said at she had seen you at the Acade- y Awards and that you wanted to ake a movie that said something nportant about America. "Harry is ally serious about this thing," she id. "He wants something big for a mmer release, something in time r the elections." She said you were orried about what's gone wrong ith the country.

That's a beautiful thought, Harry, d I know you mean it. Except for pielberg, I can't think of any other roducer in the business that has our kind of courage. But Spielberg a Democrat and a friend of Barbra reisand's, and it's easy to make ovies from the sentimental left. ll anybody needs is a conspiracy eory, an endangered species, and a ooked politician who looks like ichael Caine. You know as well as Harry, that it's always been harder r those of us on the right, particu- rly in Hollywood. But if the news om Washington is even close to ie truth, maybe the times have anged and Natalie won't have to to Paris to wear her furs.

We've known each other for a lot years, Harry, and as I've told you efore (both as a friend and as a screenwriter), you're going to have to start thinking about history. I know you don't like the idea, and more than once I've heard you say that the kids these days don't know the difference between Adolf Hitler and Abraham Lincoln, and that without the kids we've got nothing at the box office. Nada. No points. No distribution deal. No home video. Zip. But there's some great stuff in the old books, and you see what's been playing on the suburban screens—*Rob Roy*, *The Madness of King George*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Jefferson in Paris*. Maybe the kids can't spell, but they like the clothes.

I also don't know how else you can get across what I think you're trying to say about where and how the country lost its moral sense. I've heard you talk about the lack of respect for authority, about the imbecile news media and corporate lawyers who look and sound like Kato Kaelin. All good points, Harry, and well worth repeating as often as possible to anybody at the bar at Spago who has the wit to listen, but I think you make Gingrich's mistake about the Sixties. It wasn't the Sixties that wrecked the place. Things went wrong a long time before the Beatles showed up in the Hollywood Bowl and Charles Manson broke into the house in Benedict Canyon.

As I've also told you more than once, the trouble started with the American Revolution. The wrong side won the war, Harry, and it's about time that somebody said so. For two hundred years the British have been taking a very bad rap. They weren't the villains of the piece. Not by any means. You've stayed at Clivedon—two years ago if I remember correctly, during the matches at Wimbledon—and you once had dinner with Larry Olivier. You've met Prince Philip, and so you know what kind of people wrote the Magna Carta and invented constitutional government. People who believed in family values and understood the importance of property. Hearts of oak, Harry, marooned in a godforsaken wilderness in 1765, badgered by ungrateful tinsmiths, fighting for the cause of Western civilization.

If you saw *The Madness of King George*, you'll remember the last scene, when the king has recovered his wits and stands with his wife and sons on the steps of a palace, acknowledging the cheers of his loyal subjects. "Smile at the people," he says to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. "Wave to them, let them see that we're here." That's why you want to make the movie, Harry, to impart to our own Anglo-Saxon establishment a similar sense of well-being—to recover for the members of the Los Angeles Country Club the lost belief in their own legitimate authority, to teach somebody else besides Michael Jordan how to smile and wave.

I haven't worked out a script, but at this point I'd urge you to think about the purpose of the film and the sensation that it would be bound to make. Why let Oliver Stone take up all the space on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*? With the larger points in mind, I've taken the liberty of making a few notes:

1. The Eighteenth Century

Fairfield County's dream of heaven. Where we would all hope to go if we knew the right travel agent. Look at *Jefferson in Paris* and what do you see? Handsome lawns, lovely build-

ings, footmen standing behind every chair. The Republican Party in silk. The picture of a world that doesn't worry itself about class privilege and the distance between the rich and the poor. Carriages drive through the rabble in the streets of Paris in 1776, and the ladies and gentlemen on their way to a costume ball or a fireworks display don't feel obliged to wonder whether the horses might be trampling to death an occasional orphan. Even more to the point, it's easy to tell the difference between the superior and inferior classes. The former wear ruffles and brocade and amuse themselves with gossip about the political and sexual scandals of the day. The latter appear in rags, filthy and gap-toothed, shaking their fists and shouting unintelligible obscenities.

The audience experiences a feeling of relief. If so noble an age as that of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment could tolerate without guilt or remorse so lopsided a division of the world's wealth, then why should those of us here in a theater in Westwood fret about the new economic order emerging from the financial chaos of the late twentieth century?

As long ago as 1981 I remember you saying that democracy was an idea whose time had come and gone. You were on your way to Washington for Reagan's inauguration, and we were talking book deals at the Regency Hotel with a New York literary agent who thought that Jimmy Carter was a friend of the common man. "Some of us were born to pick ties on Rodeo Drive," you said then, "and others of us were born to pick lettuce in Salinas." A wonderful line, Harry, and, as always, you were ahead of the polls—ahead of Bill Casey, ahead of Buchanan and Limbaugh, even ahead of Henry Kravis and Martha Stewart.

Think of the *ancien régime* as an advertisement for the great, good American place—like an expensive Virginia suburb, or a well-run golf resort in Scottsdale, Arizona—and you have the beginning of a movie about what was lost to the world at Saratoga in the autumn of 1777. Believe me, Harry, you'll be doing your countrymen a favor. They're rich, but they don't know how to behave. Merchant Ivory have made their production company into a school of manners, and Scorsese attempted the trick in *The Age of Innocence*, but nobody has your brio, Harry, and nobody else can teach Cleveland how to walk on parquet.

2. The American Rebels

Most of them were debtors and tax cheats, and when they weren't smuggling contraband (usually rum but sometimes tea or slaves), they were forever dividing into quarrelsome factions, imagining rights where none existed and complaining about affronts to their dignity. Britain financed the Seven Years' War against the Indians and the French, paying for the defense of New England and granting God knows how much government money to people who thought that Parliament owed them a comfortable living. And what was the response when the crown attempted to reduce the subsidy? Insolence and rebellion. Speeches in Boston's Faneuil Hall as wrongheaded as the editorials in the *New York Times* complaining about the taking away of the welfare soup. Sam Adams was as much of a malcontent as Anthony Lewis or Mary McGrory, as far off the wall as Noam Chomsky, and as badly dressed as William Kunstler.

We would need to be careful with the major figures. If seen at all, they should be seen in passing or in the distance, their wigs slightly askew and their characters just enough at odds with the standard portraits to cast doubt on their objections to the British monarchy. We see in Washington his love of uniforms and portentous silences, a man forever posing for a marble statue; Jefferson talks too much and James Otis drinks; in Lafayette we see the self-importance of somebody like Donald Trump; and in Tom Paine, a stubborn intransigence that finally buried him in a pauper's grave.

The loyal American Tories occupy the foreground of the story, sober and well-to-do merchants who sent to London for their gold-headed canes and to Paris for their wine. People who kept faith with the crown of England—i.e., the original Contract with America. All men of property and sense, Harry, like most everybody you know in Bel-Air, people who saw, all too clearly what was likely to become of country given over to the passion of the mob and the theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Susan said that you wanted piece of paper before the end of th week, but my notes are in the hous at East Hampton, and my memor doesn't serve me as well as it onc did. The names of a number of wo thy characters nonetheless com more or less readily to mind: Thoma Hutchinson in Boston, who wept o reading the account of Charles I beheading; Mather Byles, who aske correctly as it turns out, "Which i better—to be ruled by one tyran three thousand miles away or b three thousand tyrants not one mil away?"; the Reverend James Maur of Fredericksburg, Virginia, a princi pled clergyman and no stranger t the canon of great books, who pu his classical education to practica use in the naming of his slaves— Clio, Cato, Ajax, and Cicero.

Hutchinson was the Lieutenan Governor of the Massachusett Colony in the 1760s and by all re ports a decent and honorable man During the Stamp Act Riots th Boston mob tore down his house, lit erally board by board, smashing th windows, splintering the furniture dragging the contents of the house (plates, books, portraits, children' clothes) into the muddy street. H was a justice of one of the Crown courts, and the next morning he ap peared on the bench in borrowe clothes, and with tears in his eyes h made what even the most zealous patriots present recognized as a par ticularly fine and affecting speech.

Susan also said that you were anx ious to find a role for Uma Thurman so you should look up the life of Eliz abeth Loring, who was known to th Boston newspapers in the 1770s as "a brilliant and unprincipled woman," "the flashing blonde," or, more sim ply, "the Sultana." Shortly after th Battle of Bunker Hill she seduced Sir William Howe, the general in com mand of the British army, who found her so engaging that he delayed by six months his assault on Philadel phia. By way of a courtesy to the la dy's husband, Howe appointed him a

nmissary of army prisons in ston. Loring returned the favor by rving to death most of the Ameri- n prisoners in his care.

f you choose to make the movie, n almost certainly would want to bloit the character of Gouverneur orris, a New York aristocrat who ote the Constitution but retained a ofound contempt for democratic eory. He later served as the Ameri- n ambassador in Paris, and re- ined in that city (the only foreign presentative to do so) during the ign of Terror. A man of courage, celligence, and resource, Harry, o shared with Talleyrand the af- tions of the Comtesse de Flahaut nother possibility for Thurman, or aybe Heather Locklear). When orris was set upon one afternoon in e Rue de Rivoli by an angry mob ent on hanging him from the near- tree as an Englishman and a spy, unfastened his wooden leg, waved above his head, and proclaimed nself an American who had lost a hb fighting for liberty. The speech s as false as the leg. Morris had suf- ed his misfortune while escaping rough a window from the husband one of his mistresses—an accident e standard texts still attribute to an erturned carriage or a drunken achman—but the Paris crowd, as orly informed and as easily gulled Costner, congratulated him with a nd of spontaneous applause.

As I say, I don't have my notes at nd, but if you decide to go for- rd with the project, it won't be rd to hire sympathetic historians pable of filling in the architecture d the hats.

THE PRODUCTION

Exquisitely photographed, at least ree hours long, and with a lot of ilosophical speeches about how e dream of liberty and equality al- ys ends up with Robespierre and e guillotine or with Napoleon in e Russian snow. You saw the re- ews of *Jefferson in Paris*, and I'm re you noticed the adjectives— Opulent," "Lavish," "Elegant," Gorgeously costumed," "First-class." ne critics might as well have been scribing a Caribbean beach hotel the menu at Le Cirque. They loved it, Harry, because they had come to see what civilization was supposed to look like. Footmen running with torches in front of the carriages! Gold lace! Montgolfier's balloon in the garden at Versailles! Wigs! People speaking French! My God, Harry, the Enlightenment!

Believe me when I tell you that you can't miss with this idea. The Republican Party over the last ten years (courtesy of its television and radio and multimedia shows) has prepared the modern audience for the happy return to what the American Tories called "Loyalty and Royalty." I don't know who you get to write or direct, but the casting should be as straightforward as possible: the pretty people (Daniel Day-Lewis, Demi Moore, Redford) as the British aristocracy, and the character actors (Randy Quaid, Tommy Lee Jones, Sigourney Weaver, Tarantino) playing the parts of the colonists. In London we see beautiful women posing for Romney and naval officers brilliantly arrived from Lord Nelson's Mediterranean squadron. Philadelphia looks as poor as threadbare Zagreb or Port-au-Prince. You also might want to consider cameo appearances by the leading figures of the age—Mozart at Kew, Casanova talking about the rustic charms of American women, Talleyrand and Benedict Arnold meeting in the inn at Falmouth.

Susan said that if Pete Wilson becomes president you probably will become the next director of the Voice of America. Make this movie the way I know you can, Harry, and you're more likely to become our ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

When I showed these notes to Susan, she was so excited that she wanted to send somebody to Palio for champagne. "Only Harry," she said. "Only Harry has got the courage to do this thing." She thought that you probably could get Edgar Bronfman to put up the studio money if you convinced him that the movie would win a prize at Cannes.

I'm in the country over the weekend. Let me know when you're ready to talk.

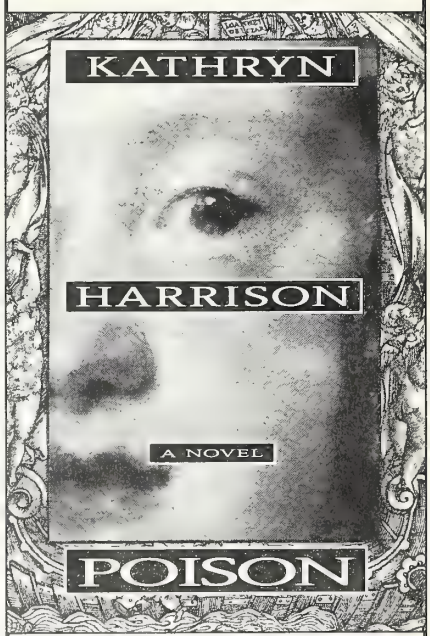
As ever,
David

From the bestselling author of *Exposure*– a rich novel of passion and repression.



POISON

"Like Scheherazade in the grip of a fever dream, Kathryn Harrison has written one of those rare books, in language of unparalleled beauty, that affirm the holiness of life."
— **Shirley Ann Grau**



"A masterpiece....I became obsessed while reading it: the plot pulls you relentlessly forward...exquisite, precise and gorgeous writing...some of the finest prose I've ever read."
— **Lucy Grealy**

"Mesmerizing...captures the depravity as well as the beauty of a frightening era."
— ***Kirkus Reviews***

A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club

RANDOM HOUSE



THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI. AS ARRANGED BY ULLA DARNI.

POUR SOMETHING PRICELESS.

Bombay® Sapphire 47% Alc/Vol (94 Proof) 100% neutral spirits. ©1994 Carillon Importers, LTD., Teaneck, N.J. ©1994 Ulla Darni.

HARPER'S INDEX

Number of bills passed by Congress that Bill Clinton has vetoed : 0

Number of U.S. presidents in this century who left office without having issued a single veto : 0

Points by which Bill Clinton's approval rating in March 1995 exceeded Ronald Reagan's in March 1983 : 5

Points by which it fell short of George Bush's approval rating in March 1991 : 41

Ratio of campaign funds raised by Phil Gramm to funds raised by the other Republican presidential candidates combined : 1:1

atio of soft-money contributions made to the Republican National Committee last January to those made in January 1993 : 24:1

'ercentage change since last year in Washington, D.C., sales of the Bug Sweeper, a telephone-surveillance detector : +100

Number of federal agencies whose officers have the authority to carry firearms and make arrests : 46

Percentage of Americans who have never been a victim of a violent crime : 86

Chances that a U.S. police chief believes the death penalty "significantly reduces the number of homicides" : 1 in 4

ercentage of all second- and third-strike felony convictions in California this past year that were for nonviolent offenses : 82

Number of the 272 U.S. prisoners executed since 1976 who were white men convicted of killing a black man : 1

Number of the sixty-one families whose genes are being mapped for the Human Genome Project who are Caucasian : 61

Percentage of white Americans who believe their race hinders their ability to achieve the American dream : 11

Factor by which Harvard's admission rate for alumni children exceeds that for other qualified applicants : 3

Percentage of Americans of English ancestry who are college graduates : 28

Percentage of Americans of Russian ancestry who are : 49

Chances that a Russian medical-school graduate in 1990 could not read an electrocardiogram : 1 in 2

Copies of the premier issue of the Russian-language edition of *Cosmopolitan* sold in Russia last summer : 60,000

Number of publications banned for at least six months last year in Nigeria : 15

Average number of prisoners in Rwanda's Gitarama prison camp, per square yard : 4

Chances that a U.N. peacekeeper deployed last year was an American : 1 in 77

Number of Ho Chi Minh scholarships awarded to students last year by a community college in New York City : 25

Weight, in pounds, of a "Big Boy" statue stolen from a Toledo outlet of the Big Boy chain last March : 300

Number of days later that its parts were found strewn across the city accompanied by notes reading "Big Boy is dead!" : 2

Average speed of a car crossing midtown Manhattan during the day, in miles per hour : 5.3

Maximum average speed in miles per hour that Manhattan's traffic commissioner believes is achievable : 9

Number of times an Akron radio station played "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" between August and October last year : 57,161

Rank of golf among sports generating the largest number of patents : 1

Rank of badminton among racket sports causing the largest number of eye injuries : 1

Number of tourists who required emergency medical services last year while waiting to tour the White House : 60

Chances that a U.S. president was born in a hospital : 1 in 21

Chances that the bedroom of an American child between the ages of ten and sixteen contains a TV set : 1 in 2

Average number of minutes an American father of a four-year-old spends alone with his child each day : 42

Portion of all divorces that occur after more than three years of marriage : 3/4

Percentage change since 1974 in the number of annulments granted to Catholic couples in the U.S. : +647

Number of churches built at truckstops since 1988 by Truckstop Ministries : 26

Number of guests who attended a Texas couple's wedding last July in the nude : 50

Price of having one's pubic hair cut and colored at Kaiserschnitt, a Berlin salon : $75

Figures cited are the latest available as of April 1995. Sources are listed on page 65.
"Harper's Index" is a registered trademark.



How inviting is your home?

It's the obvious but overlooked things that often cause home burglaries. You go on vacation, but forget to tell neighbors. And so mail and newspapers pile up. Or you leave your house totally dark. Or the fence out back is so high, it blocks the view of neighbors. Or maybe you forget to lock up. Forty percent of home invasions happen because people simply don't lock their doors and windows. The list goes on and on. To help make your home burglar-proof, see your Allstate agent.

You're in good hands.

Allstate

For a free booklet to help make your home safer, write to: Allstate, Dept. HHB, P.O. Box 7, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056-7967. © 1995 Allstate Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL

READINGS

[Memoir]

GETTING CLOSE TO THE MACHINE

From "Out of Time: Reflections on the Programming Life," by Ellen Ullman, a chapter in Resisting the Virtual Life, *edited by James Brook and Iain A. Boal, to be published this month by City Lights in San Francisco. Ullman is a software engineer living in San Francisco.*

People imagine that computer programming is logical, a process like fixing a clock. Nothing could be further from the truth. Programming is more like an illness, a fever, an obsession. It's like riding a train and never being able to get off.

The problem with programming is not that the computer is illogical—the computer is terribly logical, relentlessly literal. It demands that the programmer explain the world on its terms; that is, as an algorithm that must be written down in order, in a specific syntax, in a strange language that is only partially readable by regular human beings. To program is to translate between the chaos of human life and the rational, line-by-line world of computer language.

When you program, reality presents itself as thousands of details, millions of bits of knowledge. This knowledge comes at you from one perspective and then another, then comes a random thought, then you remember something else important, then you reconsider that idea with a what-if attached. For example, try to think of everything you know about something as simple as an invoice. Now try to tell an idiot how to prepare one. That is programming.

I used to have dreams in which I was overhearing conversations I had to program. Once I dreamed I had to program two people making love. In my dream they sweated and tumbled while I sat looking for the algorithm. The couple went from gentle caresses to ever-deepening passion, and I tried desperately to find a way to express the act of love in the C computer language.

When you are programming, you must not let your mind wander. As the human-world knowledge tumbles about in your head, you must keep typing, typing. You must not be interrupted. Any break in your concentration causes you to lose a line here or there. Some bit comes, then—oh no, it's leaving, please come back. But it may not come back. You may lose it. You will create a bug and there's nothing you can do about it.

People imagine that programmers don't like to talk because they prefer machines to people. This is not completely true. Programmers don't talk because they must not be interrupted.

This need to be uninterrupted leads to a life that is strangely asynchronous to the one lived by other human beings. It's better to send e-mail to a programmer than to call. It's better to leave a note on the chair than to expect the programmer to come to a meeting. This is because the programmer must work in mind time while the phone rings and the meetings happen in real time. It's not just ego that prevents programmers from working in groups—it's the synchronicity problem. Synchronizing with other people (or their representations in telephones, buzzers, and doorbells) can only mean interrupting the thought train. Interruptions mean bugs. You must not get off the train.

I once had a job in which I didn't talk to anyone for two years. Here was the arrangement: I was the first engineer to be hired by a

start-up software company. In exchange for large quantities of stock that might be worth something someday, I was supposed to give up my life.

I sat in a large room with two other engineers and three workstations. The fans in the machines whirred, the keys on the keyboards clicked. Occasionally one of us would grunt or mutter. Otherwise we did not speak. Now and then I would have an outburst in which I pounded the keyboard with my fists, setting off a barrage of beeps. My colleagues might have looked up, but they never said anything.

Real time was no longer compelling to me. Days, weeks, months, and years came and went without much change in my surroundings. Surely I was aging. My hair must have grown, I must have cut it, it must have slowly become grayer. Gravity must have been working on my late-thirties body, but I didn't pay attention.

What was compelling was the software. I was making something out of nothing, I thought, and I admit that the software had more life for me during those years than a brief love affair, my friends, my cat, my house, or my neighbor who was stabbed and nearly killed by her husband. One day I sat in a room by myself, surrounded by computer monitors. I remember looking at the screens and saying, "Speak to me."

I was creating something called a device-independent interface library. ("Creating"—that is the word we used, each of us a genius in the attic.) I completed the library in two years and left the company. Five years later, the company's stock went public, and the original arrangement was made good: the engineers who stayed—the ones who had given seven years of their lives to the machine—became very, very wealthy.

If you want money and prestige, you need to write code that only machines or other programmers understand. Such code is called "low." In regular life, "low" usually signifies something bad. In programming, "low" is good. Low means that you are close to the machine.

If the code creates programs that do useful work for regular human beings, it is called "high." Higher-level programs are called "applications." Applications are things that people use. Although it would seem that usefulness is a good thing, direct people-use is bad from a programmer's point of view. If regular people, called "users," can understand the task accomplished by your program, you will be paid less and held in lower esteem.

A real programmer wants to stay close to the machine. The machine means midnight dinners of Diet Coke. It means unwashed clothes and bare feet on the desk. It means anxious rides through mind time that have nothing to do with the clock. To work on things used only by machines or other programmers—that's the key. Programmers and machines don't care how you live. They don't care when you live. You can stay, come, go, sleep—or not. At the end of the project looms a deadline, the terrible place where you must get off the train. But in between, for years at a stretch, you are free: free from the obligations of time.

I once designed a graphical user interface with a man who wouldn't speak to me. My boss hired him without letting anyone else sit in on the interview. My boss lived to regret it.

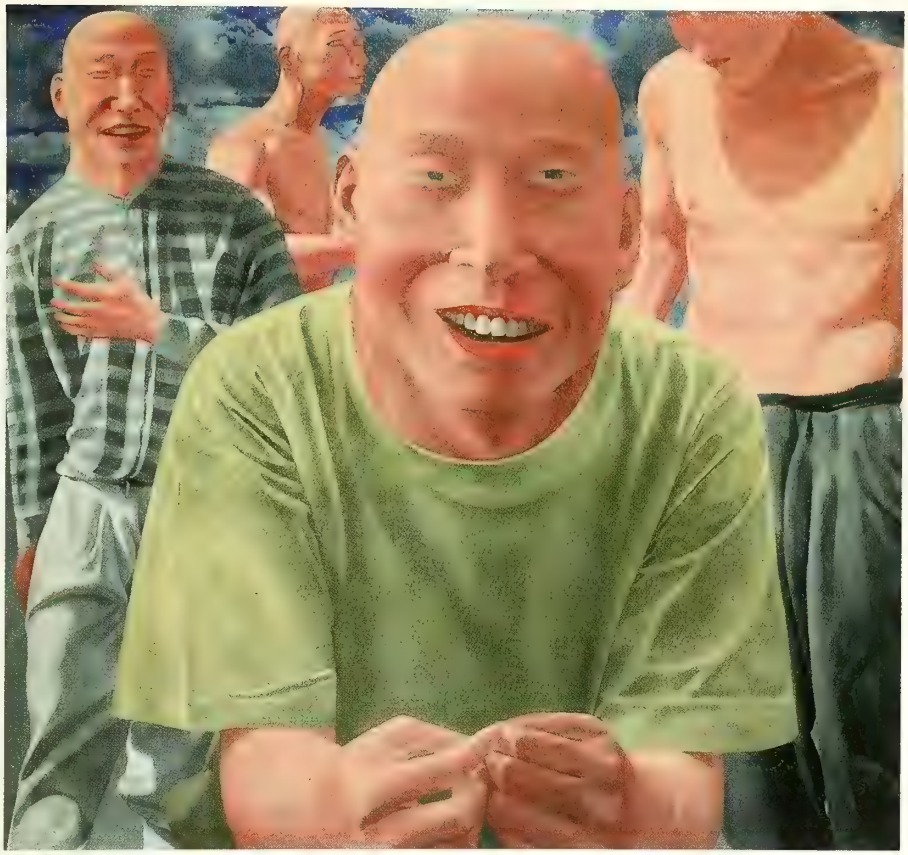
I was asked to brief my new colleague with

[Suggestions]

THE CORRECTED CONGRESS

From a list of "corrected" spellings for the last names of current members of Congress, suggested by the spell-checking feature in Microsoft Word. The list appeared in the March 30 issue of Roll Call, *a Capitol Hill newspaper.*

ARMEY: Army, Armed
BIDEN: Bidet, Bide, Bidder
BOEHNER: Boner
BONIOR: Bonier, Bonnier, Boner, Booing
BONO: Bong, Bone, Bozo, Bongo, Boo
DASCHLE: Diastole
DINGELL: Dinged
ESHOO: Echo, Shoo
FAZIO: Faze, Face, Fax
GINGRICH: Jingoish
GRAMM: Gram, Grim, Grime, Grams, Grammy, Grab, Grad, Grass, Gray
INHOFE: Inhale, Inhere, Inhume
INOUYE: Ionize
LEVIN: Lenin
LOTT: Loot, Lotto, Lot, Loath, Loathe, Lout, Loft, Loa, Lob, Log, Lost, Low, Lox
LUGAR: Lunar, Sugar
PELL: Pee, Pep, Paella
SANTORUM: Sanitarium
TAUZIN: Toxin
UNDERWOOD: Undressed, Underfed



"Series II, No. 1," by Fang Lijun. Fang is a Chinese artist who considers himself part of the "cynical realist" school, an underground art movement that began after the protests and government crackdown at Tiananmen Square in 1989. His work reflects what he calls the "absurd, mundane and meaningless events of everyday life." The painting, a self-portrait of the artist with some friends, was on display last month in Vancouver, British Columbia, as part of New Art in China, 1989–94, *an exhibition of work banned in China. The exhibition will tour the United States next year.*

the help of the third member of our team. We went into a conference room, where my coworker and I filled two white boards with lines, boxes, circles, and arrows while the new hire watched. After about a half hour, I noticed that he had become very agitated.

"Are we going too fast?" I asked him.

"Too much for the first day?" asked my colleague.

"No," said our new man, "I just can't do it like this."

"Do what?" I asked. "Like what?"

His hands were deep in his pockets. He gestured with his elbows. "Like this," he said.

"You mean design?" I asked.

"You mean in a meeting?" asked my colleague.

No answer from the new guy. A shrug. Another elbow motion.

Something terrible was beginning to occur to me. "You mean talking?" I asked.

"Yeah, talking," he said. "I can't do it by talking."

By this time in my career, I had met many strange software engineers. But here was the first one who wouldn't talk at all. We had a lot of design work to do. No talking was certainly going to make things difficult.

"So how *can* you do it?" I asked.

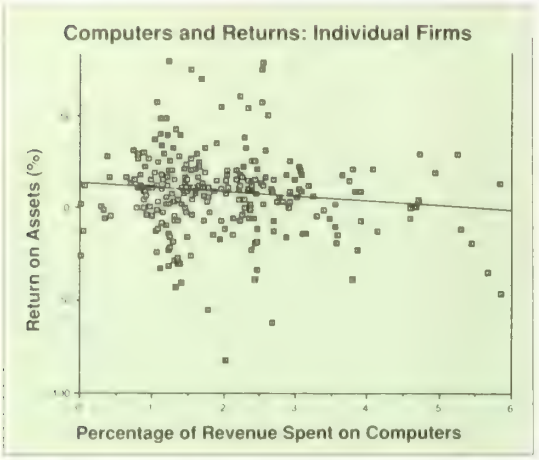
"Mail," he said. "Send me e-mail."

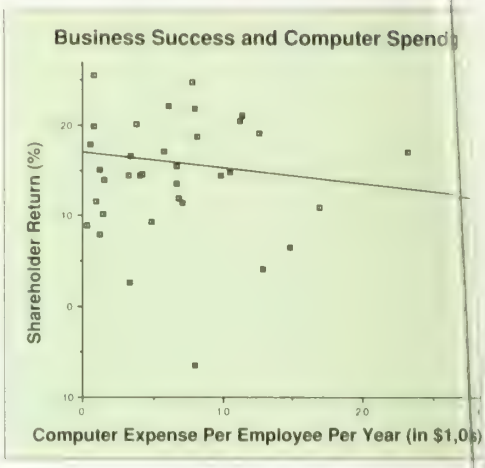
Given no choice, we designed a graphical user interface by e-mail. Corporations across North America and Europe are still using a system designed by three people in the same office who communicated via computer, one of whom barely spoke at all.

Pretty graphical interfaces are commonly called "user-friendly." But they are not really your friends. Underlying every user-friendly interface is terrific contempt for the humans who will use it.

[Graphs]

THE HIGH-TECH PRODUCTIVITY MYTH





From The Trouble with Computers: Usefulness, Usability, and Productivity, *by Thomas K. Landauer, to be pu this month by The MIT Press. Landauer's book is an investigation of the "productivity paradox," the fact that the United has undergone "a downturn of productivity growth over time coincident with widespread computerization." To create the above, Landauer, a former researcher at Bellcore, plotted data gathered by Paul Strassmann, a management consultant, relationship between business success and expenditures on computers. None of Strassmann's studies showed "any con evidence of positive value of computer use"; in fact, they demonstrated "a slight tendency for companies that spent m computers] to do worse." The graphs reflect data from up to 254 firms in various industries. In the graph on the left, the indicates each company's net income relative to its total worth; the x-axis indicates the percentage of each company's gr come spent on computers. In the graph on the right, the y-axis indicates the annual percentage returns to each company's holders; the x-axis indicates the amount of money, in thousands of dollars, each company spent on computers per employe*

The basic idea of a graphical interface is that it will not allow anything alarming to happen. You can pound on the mouse button, your cat can run across it, your baby can punch it, but the system should not crash.

To build a crash-proof system, the designer must be able to imagine—and disallow—the dumbest action possible. He or she has to think of every single stupid thing a human being could do. Gradually, over months and years, the designer's mind creates a construct of the user as an imbecile. This image is necessary. No crash-proof system can be built unless it is made for an idiot.

The designer's contempt for your intelligence is mostly hidden deep in the code. But now and then the disdain surfaces. Here's a small example: You're trying to do something simple such as copying files onto a diskette on your Mac. The program proceeds for a while, then encounters an error. Your disk is defective, says a message, and below the message is a single button. You absolutely must click this button. If you don't click it, the program will hang there indefinitely. Your disk is defective, your files may be bollixed up, but the designer leaves you only one possible reply. You must say, "OK."

The prettier the user interface, and the fewer replies the system allows you to make, the dumber you once appeared in the mind of the designer. Soon, everywhere we look, we will see pretty, idiot-proof interfaces designed to make us say, "OK." Telephones, televisions, sales kiosks will all be wired for "interactive," on-demand services. What power—demand! See a movie, order seats to a basketball game, make hotel reservations, send a card to mother—all of these services will be waiting for us on our televisions or computers whenever we want them, midnight, dawn, or day. Sleep or order a pizza: it no longer matters exactly what we do when. We don't need to involve anyone else in the satisfaction of our needs. We don't even have to talk. We get our services when we want them, free from the obligations of regularly scheduled time. We can all live, like programmers, close to the machine. "Interactivity" is misnamed. It should be called "asynchrony": the engineering culture come to everyday life.

The very word "interactivity" implies something good and wonderful. Surely a response, a reply, an answer is a positive thing. Surely it signifies an advance over something else, something bad, something that doesn't respond. There is only one problem: what we

will be interacting with is a machine. We will be "talking" to programs that are beginning to look surprisingly alike; each has little animated pictures we are supposed to choose from, like push buttons on a toddler's toy. The toy is meant to please us. Somehow it is supposed to replace the rewards of fumbling for meaning with a mature human being, in the confusion of a natural language, together, in a room, within touching distance.

As the computer's pretty, helpful face (and contemptuous underlying code) penetrates deeper into daily life, the cult of the engineer comes with it. The engineer's assumptions and presumptions are in the code. That's the purpose of the program, after all: to sum up the intelligence and intentions of all the engineers who worked on the system over time—tens and hundreds of people who have learned an odd and highly specific way of doing things. The system reproduces and re-enacts life as engineers know it: alone, out of time, disdainful of anyone far from the machine.

[Crank Call]

BILL CLINTON, MR. ACCESSIBLE

From the transcript of a January 16 radio interview conducted live on Mancow's Morning Madhouse, *on WRCX-FM in Chicago, between a* Madhouse *listener and President Bill Clinton. The show's host, Mancow Muller, had a listener named Mike call a secured White House line, the number for which Muller had somehow obtained. The transcript appeared in a story by Grant Pick in the March 31* Chicago Reader.

PRESIDENT CLINTON (*Picking up*): Yes?

MIKE: Yes. Bill, President.

CLINTON: Yes.

MIKE: Yes. How ya doing, sir? I'm a voter from the Midwest here, and I wanted to know what were you going to do to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday.

CLINTON: I'm sorry, who's this?

MIKE: This is Mike. I'm just a concerned voter out from the Midwest, and I came across this phone number. I wanted to call and see how you were going to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday today, sir.

CLINTON: I'm sorry, but this is a secure line. I don't know how you got through here.

MIKE: I don't know, sir. I must have got a wrong number, then. I'm not really sure how I got it myself. I just came across it. And here you are—and I wanted to know how you were going to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday.

CLINTON: And your name is Mike?

MIKE: Yes, sir.

CLINTON: From where, Mike?

MIKE: From the Midwest, sir. I really love you. I love what you're trying to do out there, and

[Questionnaire]

ONE MAN'S HANG-UP

From "Telephones and Your Health: The Unseen Truth," a brochure distributed last year by B. Spencer Sutton of Brooklyn, New York. Sutton is studying the "market feasibility" of a line of "sanitary handset covers" in ten colors and ten fragrances, including "wild rose" and "banana-coconut." The brochure states that telephone receivers are "disease- and germ-covered," and adds, "considering the damage [they] can cause, [they] should be at the top of the list of things to use with caution and protection."

1. If you observed a person coughing or sneezing on a telephone mouth cup, or blowing his nose into a sanitary tissue while using a phone, would you use it?

2. Would you use a handset with an accumulation of earwax and hair oil on the ear cup or saliva and food particles on the mouth cup?

3. If you observed a person with lip or mouth blisters using a phone, would you let the cup touch your lips or place it near your mouth?

4. If you noticed a person with red crusty ears or a facial or scalp rash using a telephone handset, would you use it?

5. When you or a member of your household is infected with a cold or flu, is the phone disinfected after each call by the infected person?

6. Is the infected person required to use a separate phone until the cold is gone?

7. When you drive, take a train, or fly into another city or country and need to use a public phone, do you place the public handset on your ear and mouth without any concern?

8. Do you try to hold it away from your head?

9. Would you buy an inexpensive, portable, compact, sanitary handset cover for your personal-hygiene, disease-prevention, and health-maintenance efforts?

10. How soon would you want to purchase the sanitary handset cover?

we really support you. We were just kind of curious how you are going to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday today.

CLINTON: Hold on a second please, Mike. (*Covers phone for a few seconds*) Honestly, I don't know how you got this line. I'm going to have to have it traced, because this is a secure line.

MIKE: I didn't know that.

CLINTON: I'm going to ask you to give me your last name.

MIKE: I don't really want to get in no trouble. I mean, I don't want to create no problems, especially on this line.

CLINTON: This is a secure government-executive phone line, and I do not know how you got this phone number.

MIKE: Sir, believe me, I didn't know.

CLINTON: I don't mind talking to you at all.

MIKE: Like I said, I'm really sorry. I didn't know that there was any problem with this line.

CLINTON: I do need to know how you got this phone number.

MIKE: Is this really Bill Clinton, Mr. President?

CLINTON: Yes, sir, it is.

MIKE: I really don't even have the number myself, sir. It was, like, kind of call-forwarded for me through another person.

CLINTON: Do you understand what's going on here? I mean, I'm happy to talk to you. I wish you a very happy Martin Luther King Day.

MIKE: I called for no disrespect.

CLINTON: I just want you to understand. This is a secure line. Very few people are authorized to use this line. The Vice President, the Secretary of State.

MIKE: Okay, sir. I'm very sorry.

CLINTON: All right. Have a good day now.

[Press Releases]

BOB DOLE'S BRIEF FOREIGN CRISIS

From statements issued in February by the office of Burhanettin Ozfatura, the mayor of Izmir, a city in western Turkey. The mayor apparently was reacting to efforts by Senator Bob Dole to prohibit further aid to Turkey because of Turkey's blockade of humanitarian aid to Armenia.

February 24, 1995

After receiving complaints from our citizens, we conducted an investigation and discovered that the owner of the company that distributes Dole bananas is Robert Dole, the United States senator who is waging an intensive campaign against Turkey.

The mayor of Izmir, Dr. Burhanettin Ozfatura, said it would not be in Turkey's national interest to purchase goods from a company owned by someone who is trying to blacken Turkey's name.

Officials of Tanasas, Izmir's municipally owned supermarket, said that Dole bananas will be removed from its seventeen stores and replaced with Chiquita and Bonita bananas.

February 26, 1995

The mayor said that he was misinformed about the ownership of the Dole company, and that the sale of Dole bananas would resume immediately. The mayor stated that the ban had been useful, though, because it showed Americans that the Turkish public is very sensitive to foes of Turkey.

[Report]

THE MILITARY AND GAYS: STILL ASKING

From "Conduct Unbecoming Continues: The First Year Under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue,'" a report issued in February by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a watchdog organization formed to assist men and women affected by the military's policy on homosexuals. The group uncovered 340 instances in which the military has violated its year-old "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on homosexual servicemembers. In March, a federal judge ruled that the policy itself was an unconstitutional violation of the rights of gay military personnel; the Justice Department is appealing the decision.

DON'T ASK

One Chief of Boat asked a sailor, "You're not going to tell me you're a fucking faggot, are you?" In Japan, Special Agent Jose Abrante asked a Marine point-blank, "Are you gay?" In Florida, recruiters asked one recruit five times, both verbally and through use of outdated written forms, whether she was homosexual. In the Washington, D.C., area, a security-clearance investigator asked, "I'm not going to ask you if you're homosexual, but if I did ask, how would you respond?"

An inquiry official asked a male Sergeant, "Do you find men attractive?" An executive

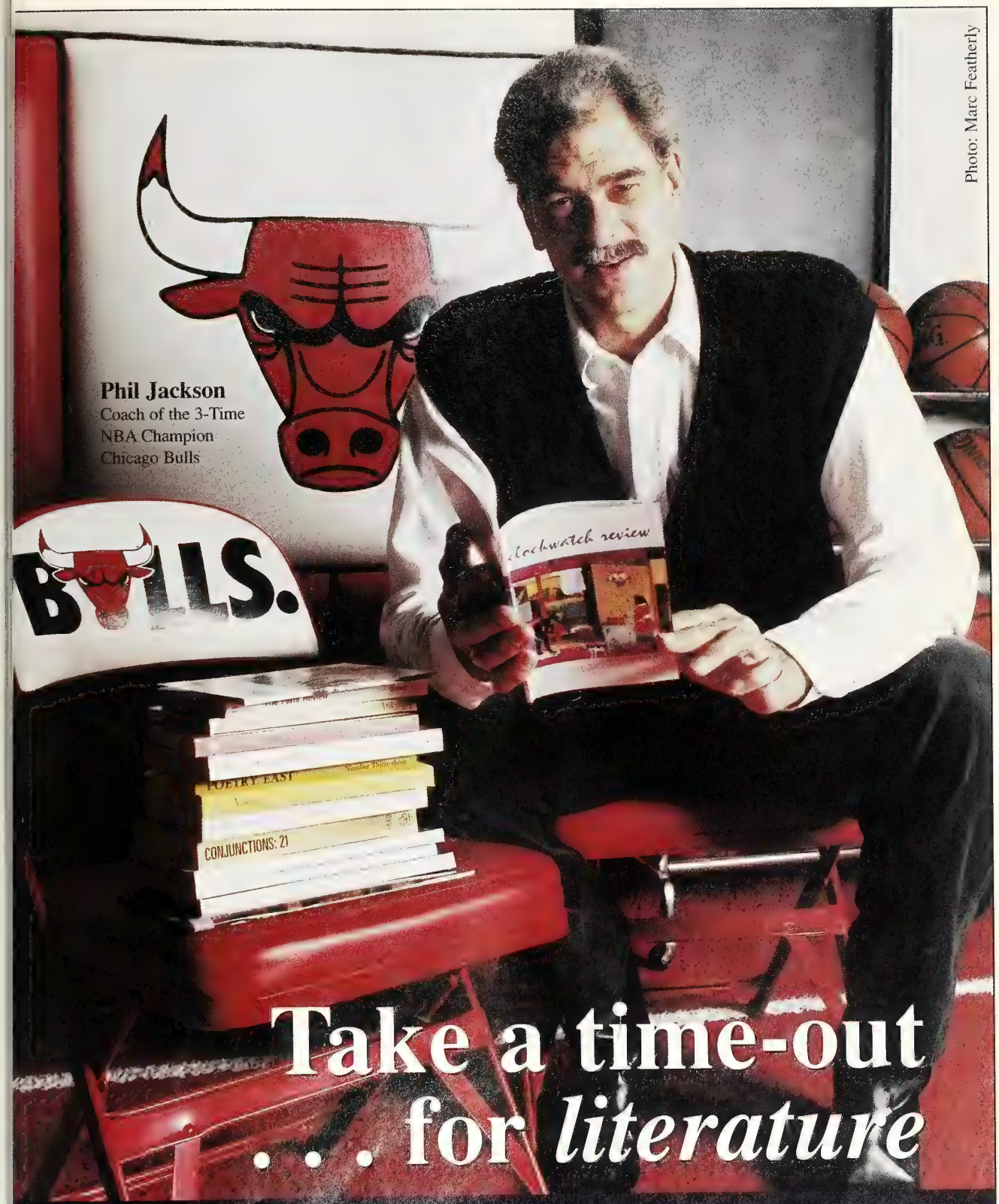


Photo: Marc Featherly

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The photograph above shows "Legacy Golf," by James Montford, part of Strokes of Genius, *a playable eighteen-hole miniature-golf course, designed by local artists, on display through October at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln, Massachusetts. According to the show's catalogue, Montford's hole, a par 3, "examines the 'old-boy' network in America, which unjustly favors whites over minorities." There are two holes in Montford's installation; players selected as "white" get to shoot at the oversized "legacy" hole a foot from the tee; the "minority" hole is at the other end of the green, and presents the putter with a series of obstacles, such as "Uncle Ben's Rice Trap" and the "Aunt Jemima Pancake Pit." Montford lives in Norwich, Connecticut.*

officer asked a PFC whether she had "homosexual tendencies." A security-clearance investigator asked an Army Major about her female roommate: "Do you have a physical relationship?" Another security-clearance investigator in Alabama asked during an interview whether the individual knew "any homosexuals."

DON'T PURSUE

SLDN documented fifteen actual or attempted witch-hunts under the new regulations—instances in which commanders and inquiry officials asked military members to identify those among them who were, or were suspected of being, homosexual. In Japan, over twenty-one servicemembers were questioned regarding the sexual orientation and private lives of their co-workers. At New River Station, North Carolina, immediately after briefing his unit about the military's new policy on March 1, 1994, a Marine Master Sergeant told his troops that, despite the regulations, they had "a moral duty and an obligation" to turn in suspected homosexuals.

Overzealous commands continue to conduct or condone illegal searches and seizures of items belonging to suspected homosexual servicemembers. They continue to confiscate personal and private items, as well as circumstantial evidence, that, according to regulations, should have no bearing on an inquiry. Commanders and inquiry officials routinely seize personal diaries, private letters, address books, personal computers, erased computer files, photos of friends, copies of popular gay-themed books and videos like *Torch Song Trilogy*, HIV pamphlets, academic notes from classes on human sexuality, and, in one serviceman's case, even a pair of men's platform shoes.

DON'T HARASS

SLDN discovered ten cases in which servicemembers' lives were threatened for being, or being believed to be, gay. Captain Miller, a commander in Misawa, Japan, reportedly told a heterosexual servicemember, "You're going to die," after the servicemember's recommended discharge for alleged homosexual conduct

had been overturned. A new recruit in South Carolina was told she was not "going to walk out of here alive" if she reported being physically assaulted because she was suspected of lesbianism. A seaman reported finding a noose next to his berth; he had previously found a note scrawled on a magazine photo that read "Die Fag." The Pentagon has established no means whereby servicemembers who report death threats or instances of harassment can be guaranteed that the report will not be used to start an investigation against them.

[Complications]

POORLY EXECUTED

From a list of recent executions in the United States marked by malfunctions and mishaps, compiled by Michael Radelet, a professor of sociology at the University of Florida, and distributed by the Death Penalty Information Center, in Washington, D.C. According to Radelet there have been at least seventeen "botched" executions since 1976, when the Supreme Court allowed states to impose death-penalty laws.

JOHN EVANS, ALABAMA,
ELECTRIC CHAIR, APRIL 22, 1983

After the first jolt of electricity, sparks and flames erupted from the electrode attached to Evans's leg. The electrode then burst from the strap holding it in place and caught on fire. Two physicians entered the chamber and found a heartbeat. The electrode was reattached to Evans's leg, creating more smoke and burning flesh. Again, doctors found a heartbeat. A third jolt was applied. The execution took fourteen minutes and left Evans's body charred and smoldering.

RANDY WOOLLS, TEXAS,
LETHAL INJECTION, AUGUST 20, 1986

Woolls, a former drug addict, had to help the execution technicians find a good vein for the lethal injection.

JIMMY LEE GRAY, MISSISSIPPI,
GAS CHAMBER, SEPTEMBER 2, 1983

Officials had to clear the observation room eight minutes after the gas was released because Gray's desperate gasps for air were repulsing witnesses.

RAYMOND LANDRY, TEXAS,
LETHAL INJECTION, DECEMBER 14, 1988

Two minutes into the execution, the syringe came out of Landry's vein, spraying deadly chemicals across the room toward witnesses. The observation curtain was pulled for four-

[Findings]

A NO-HITTER?

From "Impact of Yankee Stadium Bat Day on Blunt Trauma in Northern New York City," by Drs. Steven L. Bernstein, William P. Rennie, and Kumar Alagappan, in the March 1994 issue of Annals of Emergency Medicine. *The doctors work in emergency rooms in the New York metropolitan area.*

Emergency physicians in New York City have long suspected an increase in blunt trauma in the areas surrounding Yankee Stadium after Bat Day, when the stadium distributes free baseball bats to spectators. To determine whether such a correlation exists, we conducted a study of all cases of blunt trauma presented to emergency departments in the Bronx and northern Manhattan during the ten days before and the ten days after Bat Day.

Contrary to the informal impressions of emergency physicians, our study documented equal numbers of reported baseball-bat injuries before and after Bat Day. Only three of the seventy-seven patients in the study (3.9 percent) claimed to have been struck with Yankee bats, one before and two after Bat Day. Fifty-nine of the seventy-seven patients (77 percent) could not identify the type of bat with which they were assaulted.

Why the apparent lack of effect of free baseball bats on the incidence of blunt trauma in northern New York City? First, it is likely that many attendees at the game, if not most, did not live in the Bronx or northern Manhattan. We did not collect data on bat injuries from surrounding areas, whose residents doubtless attended the game. It is therefore possible that we missed a Bat Day effect by failing to include a large enough geographic area.

Another reason is, we believe, most significant. New York City, the Bronx in particular, contains neighborhoods wracked by extreme poverty, high rates of drug and alcohol use, and easy availability of firearms and other weapons. In 1989, 45,855 felonious assaults were reported to New York City police; 9,577 (21 percent) of these occurred in the Bronx, and 2,483 (26 percent) of those were committed with a blunt instrument. It therefore seems probable that the addition of several thousand baseball bats into such a setting would make little difference in the overall incidence of blunt trauma.

teen minutes while the execution team reinserted the catheter into the vein.

EDWARD LEE PARKS, 38, ALABAMA,
LETHAL INJECTION, MARCH 11, 1992

Two minutes after the drugs were administered, the muscles in Parks's jaw, neck, and abdomen began to react spasmodically for approximately forty-five seconds. Parks continued to gasp and violently gag until he died, eleven minutes after the drugs were administered.

RICHARD WAYNE TATE, 35, FLORIDA,
ELECTRIC CHAIR, MAY 4, 1992

A natural sponge in the headpiece of the execution apparatus had been replaced with a synthetic sponge, when Tatero's execution began, six inch flames erupted from the headpiece. Three jolts of power were required to stop Tatero's breathing.

[Essay]

THE VIOLENT POLITICS OF CRIME

Adapted from "One Violent Crime," by Bruce Shapiro, in the April 3 issue of The Nation. *Shapiro is an editor and writer for the weekly. he lives in New Haven, Connecticut.*

Alone in my home I am staring at the television screen and shouting. On the local evening news I have unexpectedly encountered video footage, several months old, of myself writhing on an ambulance gurney—skin pale, shirt open and drenched with blood, trying desperately to find relief from pain.

On the evening of August 7, 1994, I was among seven people stabbed and seriously wounded in a cafe a few blocks from my house. Any televised recollection of this incident would be upsetting. But tonight's anger is quite specific, and political, in origin: My picture is being shown on the news to illustrate why my state's legislature plans to lock up more criminals for a longer time. A picture of my body, contorted and bleeding, has become a propaganda image in the crime war. I had not planned to write about this assault. But for months now the politics of the nation have in large part been the politics of crime, from last year's federal crime bill to the "Taking Back Our Streets" clause of the Contract with America. Among a welter of reactions to my own recent experience, one feeling is clear: I am unwilling to be a silent poster child in this debate.

Here is what happened: At about 9:45 P.M. I arrived at the coffeehouse on Audubon Street with two neighborhood friends, Martin and Anna. We sat at a small table near the front; about fifteen people were scattered around the room. Just before ten, as Martin went over to the counter for a final refill, chaos erupted. I heard him call Anna's name. I looked up and saw his arm raised and a flash of metal and people leaping away from a thin, bearded man with a ponytail. Tables and chairs toppled. Without thinking I shouted to Anna, "Get down!" Clinging to each other, we pulled ourselves along the wall toward the door.

What actually happened I was only tentatively able to reconstruct later. Apparently, as Martin headed toward the counter the thin, bearded man, whose name we later learned was Daniel Silva, asked the time from another patron, who answered and then turned to leave. Without warning, Silva pulled out a hunting knife and began moving about the room with demonic speed, stabbing six people in a matter of seconds. Among these were Martin, stabbed in the thigh and the arm, the woman behind the counter, stabbed in the chest and abdomen while phoning the police, and Anna, stabbed in the side as we pulled each other toward the door.

I had gone no more than a few steps down the sidewalk when I felt a hard punch in my back followed instantly by the unforgettable sensation of skin and muscle tissue parting. Silva had stabbed me about six inches above my waist, just beneath my rib cage. Without thinking, I clapped my hand over the wound before the knife was out, and the exiting blade sliced my palm and two fingers.

"Why are you doing this?" I cried out. I fell, and he leaned over my face, the knife's glittering blade immense. He put the point into my chest. I remember his brown beard, his clear blue gray eyes looking directly into mine, and the round globe of a streetlamp like a halo above his head.

"You killed my mother," Silva answered. At my own desperate response—"Please don't"—he pulled the knifepoint out of my chest and disappeared. A moment later I saw him flying down the street on a battered bicycle.

I lay on the sidewalk, screaming in pain. Every muscle in my back felt locked and contorted; breathing was excruciating. A woman in a white and gray plaid dress was sitting on the curb in a stupor, covered with blood. Up the street I saw a police car's flashing lights, then another's, then an officer with a concerned face and a crackling radio was crouching beside me. I stayed conscious as the medics arrived and I was loaded into an ambulance.



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Until August 7 Daniel Silva was a self-employed junk dealer and a homeowner. He lived with his mother and several dogs. He had no arrest record. A police detective who was hospitalized across the hall from me recalled Silva as a socially marginal neighborhood character. He was not, apparently, a drug user. He had told neighbors about much violence in his family—showing one a scar on his thigh he said was from a stab wound.

A week earlier, Silva's seventy-nine-year-old mother had been hospitalized for diabetes. After a few days the hospital moved her to a new room; when Silva saw his mother's empty bed he panicked, but nurses swiftly took him to her new location. Still, something seemed to have snapped. On the day of the stabbings, police say, Silva released his dogs, set fire to his house, and rode away on his bicycle as his home burned. He arrived on Audubon Street evidently convinced that his mother was dead.

While I lay in the hospital, the big story on CNN was the federal crime bill then being debated in Congress. Even fogged by morphine I was aware of the irony. I was flat on my back, with tubes in veins, chest, penis, and abdomen, the result of a particularly violent assault, while Congress was busy passing the anticrime package that I had criticized in print just a few weeks earlier. Night after night, unable to sleep, I watched Republicans and Democrats fall over one another to prove who could be the toughest on crime.

A few days after I returned home, the bill passed. What I found when I finally read its 412-page text was this: Not a single one of those pages would have protected me or Anna or Martin or any of the others from our assailant. Not the extended prison terms, not the forty-four new death-penalty offenses, not the three-strikes-and-you're-out requirements, not the summary deportations of criminal aliens. The even stiffer provisions of the Contract with America, including the proposed abolition of the Fourth Amendment's search-and-seizure protections, still would have offered me no practical protection.

On the other hand, the mental-health and social-welfare safety net shredded during the 1980s might have made a difference in the life of someone like my assailant—and thus in the life of someone like me. Silva's growing distress in the days before August 7 was obvious to his neighbors. He had muttered darkly about relatives planning to burn down his house. A better-funded, more comprehensive social-service infrastructure might have saved me and six others from untold pain and trouble.

In fact, it was in no small measure the institutions of an urban community that saved my life that night. The police officer who found me was joined in a moment by a phalanx of emergency medics, and his backups arrived quickly enough to chase down my assailant three blocks away. In minutes I was taken to nearby Yale–New Haven hospital—built in part with the kind of public funding so hated by the right—where several dozen doctors and nurses descended to handle all the wounded. If my stabbing had taken place in the suburbs, I would have bled to death.

One thing I could not properly appreciate in the hospital was how deeply other people were shaken by the stabbings. The reaction of most was a combination of decent horrified empathy and a clear sense that their own presumption of safety had been undermined. But some who didn't bother to acquaint themselves with the facts used the stabbings as a sort of Rorschach test on which they projected their own preconceptions. Some present and former Yale students, for instance, were desperate to see in my stabbing evidence of the great dangers of New Haven's inner city. One student newspaper wrote about "New Haven's image as a dangerous town fraught with violence." A student reporter from another Yale paper asked if I didn't think the attack proved that New Haven needs better police protection. Given the random nature of this assault, it's tempting to dismiss such sentiments. But city-hating is central to today's political culture. Newt Gingrich excoriates cities as hopelessly pestilent, crime-ridden, and corrupt. Fear of urban crime is the right's basic fuel, and defunding cities is a central agenda item for the new congressional majority.

"Why didn't anyone try to stop him?" That question was even more common than the reflexive city-bashing. I can't begin to guess the number of times I had to answer it. Each time, I repeated that Silva moved too fast, that it was simply too confusing. And each time, I found the question not just foolish but offensive.

"Why didn't anyone stop him?" To understand that question is to understand, in some measure, why crime is such a potent political issue. To begin with, the question carries not empathy but an implicit burden of blame; it really asks, "Why didn't *you* stop him?" It is asked because no one likes to imagine oneself a victim. It's far easier to imagine assuming the aggressive power of the attacker, to embrace the delusion of oneself as Arnold Schwarzenegger: *If I am tough enough and strong enough, I can take out the bad guys.*

[Experiment]

CITIES OF BROTHERLY LOVE

From "Cities with Heart," a study by Robert Levine in the Winter 1994/1995 issue of The Responsive Community. *Levine and his researchers conducted a series of experiments in thirty-six U.S. cities "to test how likely it is that a stranger will be offered help"; the study "focused on simple acts of civility, as opposed to Schindler-like acts of heroism." The researchers conducted six experiments in which they posed as pedestrians in need and recorded the responses of passersby; in the experiments included below, they dropped pens, asked for change for a quarter, dropped piles of magazines while wearing leg braces, and stood on curbs pretending to be blind people trying to cross the street. For each trial, Levine ranked the cities in order of helpfulness; he then ranked the cities for overall helpfulness. The table below first appeared in* American Demographics.

MOST HELPFUL CITIES

DROPPED PEN	MAKE CHANGE	HURT LEG	BLIND PERSON	OVERALL
Springfield, MA	Louisville, KY	Chattanooga, TN	Kansas City, MO	Rochester, NY
Santa Barbara, CA	Houston, TX	Fresno, CA*	Knoxville, TN	East Lansing, MI
East Lansing, MI*	Knoxville, TN	Nashville, TN*	Rochester, NY	Nashville, TN
Louisville, KY*	Canton, OH	Sacramento, CA*	Bakersfield, CA*	Memphis, TN
San Francisco, CA	Detroit, MI*	Shreveport, LA*	Dallas, TX*	Houston, TX
	East Lansing, MI*		Nashville, TN*	

LEAST HELPFUL CITIES

DROPPED PEN	MAKE CHANGE	HURT LEG	BLIND PERSON	OVERALL
Chicago, IL	Paterson, NJ	Los Angeles, CA	Salt Lake City, UT	New York, NY
New York, NY	New York, NY	New York, NY	Boston, MA*	Paterson, NJ
Buffalo, NY	Sacramento, CA	San Francisco, CA	Fresno, CA*	Los Angeles, CA
Youngstown, OH	San Francisco, CA	Philadelphia, PA	Paterson, NJ*	Fresno, CA
San Jose, CA	Providence, RI	Buffalo, NY*	Sacramento, CA*	Sacramento, CA
		Louisville, KY*	San Diego, CA*	
			Springfield, MA*	

Note: Asterisks indicate a tie.

The country is at present suffering from a huge version of this same delusion, a myth nurtured by historical tales of frontier violence and vigilantism and by the action-hero fantasies of film and television. Bolstered by the social Darwinists of the right, who see society as an unfettered marketplace in which the strongest individuals flourish, this delusion frames the crime debate.

To ask, "Why didn't anybody stop him?" is to imply only two choices: Rambo-like heroism or abject victimhood, fight or flight. And people don't want to think of themselves choosing flight. In last year's debate over the crime bill, conservatives successfully portrayed themselves as those who would stand and fight; liberals were portrayed as ineffectual cowards.

But on the receiving end of a violent attack, the fight-or-flight dichotomy didn't apply. Nor did that radically individualized notion of survival. At the coffeehouse that night there were no Schwarzeneggers, no stand-alone heroes. But neither were there abject victims. The woman behind the counter helped one of the wounded out the back window; Anna, Martin, and I clung to one another as we escaped; and two patrons who had never met sought a hiding place together around the corner. In the confusion and panic of life-threatening attack, people reached out to one another. This sounds simple, yet it suggests that there is an instinct for mutual aid that poses a profound challenge to the atomized individualism of the right.

I do understand the rage and frustration behind the crime-victim movement, and see how the right has harnessed it. Anyone trying to deal with the reality of crime, as opposed to the fantasies peddled to win elections, needs to



From a series of photographs by Leon Borensztein of physically and mentally handicapped artists and their art. The artists are participants in the Creative Growth Art Center, an arts program for the handicapped in Oakland, California. Borensztein's work is on display this month at the Photos Gallery in San Francisco.

understand the complex suffering of those who are survivors of such traumas, and the suffering and turmoil of their families. I have impressive physical scars, but to me the disruption of my psyche is more significant. For weeks after the attack, I awoke nightly, agitated, drenched with sweat. Any moment of mental repose was instantly flooded with images from that night. Sometimes my mind simply would not tune in at all. My reactions are still out of balance and disproportionate. I shut a door on my finger, not too hard, and my body is suddenly flooded with adrenaline, nearly faint. Walking on the arm of my partner, Margaret, one evening I abruptly shove her to the side of the road because I have seen a tall, lean shadow a block away. An hour after an argument, I find myself quaking with rage, completely unable to restore my sense of calm.

What psychologists call post traumatic stress disorder is, among other things, a profoundly political state, in which the world has gone wrong, in which you feel isolated from the broader community by the unarticulable extremity of experience. I have spent a lot of time in the past few months thinking about what the world must look like to those who have survived repeated violent attacks—to children battered in their homes and prisoners beaten or tortured behind bars—and to those, like rape victims, whose assaults are rarely granted the public ratification that mine was.

If the use of my picture on television unexpectedly brought me face to face with the memory of August 7, some part of the attack is relived for me daily as I watch the gruesome, voyeuristically reported details of the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. And throughout the Colin Ferguson trial, as he spoke of falling asleep and having someone else fire his gun, I heard Daniel Silva's calm, secure voice telling me I had killed his mother. When I hear testimony by the survivors of that massacre—on a train as comfortable and familiar to them as my neighborhood coffee bar is to me—I feel a great and incommunicable fellowship.

But the public obsession with these trials, I am convinced, has no more to do with the real experience of crime victims than do the posturings of politicians. I do not know what made my assailant act as he did. Nor do I think crime and violence can be reduced to simple political categories. I do know that the answers will not be found in social Darwinism and individualism, in racism, in dismantling cities and increasing the destitution of the poor. To the contrary, every fragment of my experience suggests that the best protection from crime and the best aid to victims are the very social institutions most derided by the right. As a crime victim and a citizen, what I want is the reality of a safe community—not a politician's fantasyland of restitution and revenge. That is my testimony.

[Interview]

AN URGE TO FLEA

From an interview with Maria Fernanda Cardoso, the creator of the Cardoso Flea Circus, in the Winter issue of Border Crossings, *a Winnipeg, Manitoba, arts magazine. Cardoso is an artist in San Francisco; her flea circus currently includes three hundred fleas, which perform on three different stages. The interview was conducted by Robert Enright.*

ROBERT ENRIGHT: Do fleas have individual characteristics?

MARIA CARDOSO: They definitely have different personalities. I didn't believe it until I started to test them. Some of them would be very passive and others would just be jumping everywhere. You can sometimes make them jump with your own breath, because they like the carbon dioxide. They're also very sensitive to vibrations and to darkness. I can direct the heat of a lamp on a certain spot and make them jump away. They want to go to dark areas to hide. It's a survival thing.

ENRIGHT: What are you training them to do now?

CARDOSO: I'm doing a flea golf game, and I'm trying to make a flea wave the little flag that marks where the hole is.

ENRIGHT: Do fleas have a memory track? Once you teach a flea to wave a flag, will it wave a flag forever?

CARDOSO: You can train them for only one trick. One flea, one trick. You have to go over it again and again.

ENRIGHT: Do they really sword fight?

CARDOSO: They do.

ENRIGHT: What would compel them to fight? Why don't they just move in opposite directions?

CARDOSO: Well, they're attached to the stage. You attach the swords to their arms. They try to get rid of the swords, and that's what makes their moves so desperate. It's all a struggle to escape, and that's part of their instinctual behavior. They pull chariots, for example, because they're just trying to get away. I don't know if this is cruel or not.

ENRIGHT: Are these cat fleas you're using?

CARDOSO: Yes. But the traditional flea for the flea circus is the human flea, *pulex irritans*. They are almost extinct and that's a problem for flea trainers all over the world.

ENRIGHT: Are there characteristics of the human flea that make it more desirable as a performer?

CARDOSO: You can feed them yourself. That's part of the training. You have to feed them yourself because you have to establish a relationship with them.

ENRIGHT: You take some pleasure from them feeding on your arm?

CARDOSO: Yes. I enjoy it.

ENRIGHT: In making a world from scratch,

[Credits]

BODIES OF WORK

From a correction in the September 1994 issue of Skin & Ink, *a tattoo magazine published in Beverly Hills, California.*

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we did not receive the artists' credits for Laurie Steelink and Bill Beccio's work ("Laurie Steelink and the Angst of Art," *Skin & Ink*, August 1994) until after the pages were shipped to the printer.

For the record, Laurie has had work done by the following people: tribal bone band on left arm by Greg Kulz; Maori piece on left arm by Bill Beccio; tribal abstract and ankle bracelet on right leg by Bill Beccio; gray-shaded lotus blossom and daisy by Mike Perfetto; frog pattern on left leg by Bill Beccio; abstract flowers on left thigh by Hanky Panky. All others on left leg are self-done.

Bill's right arm features Zippy, an Indian god, Celtic miniatures, and a skeletal figure, all by Greg Kulz; barbed wire by Erno; and pattern work by Laurie Steelink. Bill did the tissue section and the placenta himself, and he and Laurie collaborated on the "primal organism."

On his left arm, Bill has an eye, green flames, and black tribal work by Laurie; "Mom" by Mike Perfetto; a Pall Mall logo, a skeletal hand, an atom, and black sperm by Greg Kulz; and a fish by Bernie Luther. Also on that arm, Laurie and Greg teamed up for a winged figure and a bat, and Laurie, Greg, and Scott Sterling applied a cross.

The eyes and larvae on Bill's chest are by Laurie; the salamander is by Greg and Bill; and Bill did his stomach piece himself. The work on his butt and hip are by Laurie, and his left thigh is self-done. Bill and Gary did the skulls on his left calf, and all the work on his right foot is his own.

[Distinction]

NONE DARE CALL IT MIME

From Talking About Mime: An Illustrated Guide, *by David Alberts, published by Heinemann. Alberts, who lives in La Mesa, California, has been performing and teaching mime for twenty-five years.*

Mime is not a mass-market art, nor does it necessarily appeal to the masses. Do not be misled by the popular amusement-park and street-corner variety of so-called mime performers. Some may be gifted mimics or otherwise talented entertainers, but what they do rarely constitutes the true art of mime.

Examine what they do and you will find that one or more of the essential elements of the art of mime is missing. There may be no plot, for instance. Or there may be no illusion. Or there may be no real communication between performer and audience, no flow of ideas, thoughts, or feelings. Most often, however, what is missing is a theme, a substantial meaning to the presentation. Mime illusions performed outside of a theme-based framework are nothing more than technical exercises, without purpose and often without artistry.

In this kind of performance, there is no bottom line other than to entertain. I do not intend to demean the work of the amusement-park and street-corner performers; to entertain is a noble calling in its own right. But none dare call it mime without first understanding the essential elements of the art.

Unfortunately, it is this type of quasi-mime performance that has imparted a rather derogatory connotation to the terms "mime" and "mime artist" for the general public. The mime that most people see, if they see any, is this backyard version—going for the easy laugh by mimicking passersby, making silly faces, annoying innocent patrons, taking pratfalls, and performing seemingly endless (and technically deficient) variations of "The Wall," "Blowing Up a Balloon," and "Walking Against the Wind." This all too common conception of mime has undermined the public's understanding of the art. As a result, mime has most likely lost a considerable part of its potential audience. This is a challenge that every serious mime artist must understand and strive to overcome.

there is a sense in which you're playing God.

CARDOSO: But on the other hand, I'm their slave. I work with them, I feed them, I take care of them. They have control over me because I devote my life to them. This domination is very complex.

[Essay]

THE CASE AGAINST CHORES

From "Idle Hands," by Jane Smiley, in the Spring issue of Hungry Mind Review. *Smiley is the author, most recently, of the novel* Moo; *she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for her novel* A Thousand Acres.

I've lived in the upper Midwest for twenty-one years now, and I'm here to tell you that the pressure to put your children to work is unrelenting. So far I've squirmed out from under it, and my daughters have led a life of almost tropical idleness, much to their benefit. My son, however, may not be so lucky. His father was himself raised in Iowa and put to work at an early age, and you never know when, in spite of all my husband's best intentions, that early training might kick in.

Although "chores" are so sacred in my neck of the woods that almost no one ever discusses their purpose, I have over the years gleaned some of the reasons parents give for assigning them. I'm not impressed. Mostly the reasons have to do with developing good work habits or, in the absence of good work habits, at least habits of working. No such thing as a free lunch, any job worth doing is worth doing right, work before play, all of that. According to this reasoning, the world is full of jobs that no one wants to do. If we divide them up and get them over with, then we can go on to pastimes we like. If we do them "right," then we won't have to do them again. Lots of times, though, in a family, that *we* doesn't operate. The operative word is *you*. The practical result of almost every child-labor scheme that I've witnessed is the child doing the dirty work and the parent getting the fun: Mom cooks and Sis does the dishes; the parents plan and plant the garden, the kids weed it. To me, what this teaches the child is the lesson of alienated labor: not to love the work but to get it over with; not to feel pride in one's contribution but to feel resentment at the waste of one's time.

Another goal of chores: the child con-

tributes to the work of maintaining the family. According to this rationale, the child comes to understand what it takes to have a family, and to feel that he or she is an important, even indispensable member of it. But come on. Would you really want to feel loved primarily because you're the one who gets the floors mopped? Wouldn't you rather feel that your family's love simply exists all around you, no matter what your contribution? And don't the parents love their children anyway, whether the children vacuum or not? Why lie about it just to get the housework done? Let's be frank about the other half of the equation too. In this day and age, it doesn't take much work at all to manage a household, at least in the middle class—maybe four hours a week to clean the house and another four to throw the laundry into the washing machine, move it to the dryer, and fold it. Is it really a good idea to set the sort of example my former neighbors used to set, of mopping the floor every two days, cleaning the toilets every week, vacuuming every day, dusting, dusting, dusting? Didn't they have anything better to do than serve their house?

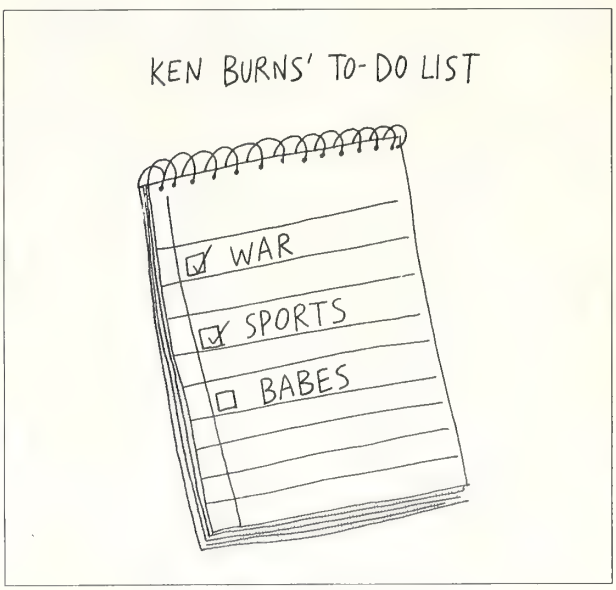
Let me confess that I wasn't expected to lift a finger when I was growing up. Even when my mother had a full-time job, she cleaned up after me, as did my grandmother. Later there was a housekeeper. I would leave my room in a mess when I headed off for school and find it miraculously neat when I returned. Once in a while I vacuumed, just because I liked the pattern the Hoover made on the carpet. I did learn to run water in my cereal bowl before setting it in the sink.

Where I discovered work was at the stable, and, in fact, there is no housework like horsework. You've got to clean the horses' stalls, feed them, groom them, tack them up, wrap their legs, exercise them, turn them out, and catch them. You've got to clip them and shave them. You have to sweep the aisle, clean your tack and your boots, carry bales of hay and buckets of water. Minimal horsekeeping, rising just to the level of humaneness, requires many more hours than making a few beds, and horsework turned out to be a good preparation for the real work of adulthood, which is rearing children. It was a good preparation not only because it was similar in many ways but also because my desire to do it, and to do a good job of it, grew out of my love of and interest in my horse. I can't say that cleaning out her bucket when she manured in it was an actual joy, but I knew she wasn't going to do it herself. I saw the purpose of my labor, and I wasn't alienated from it.

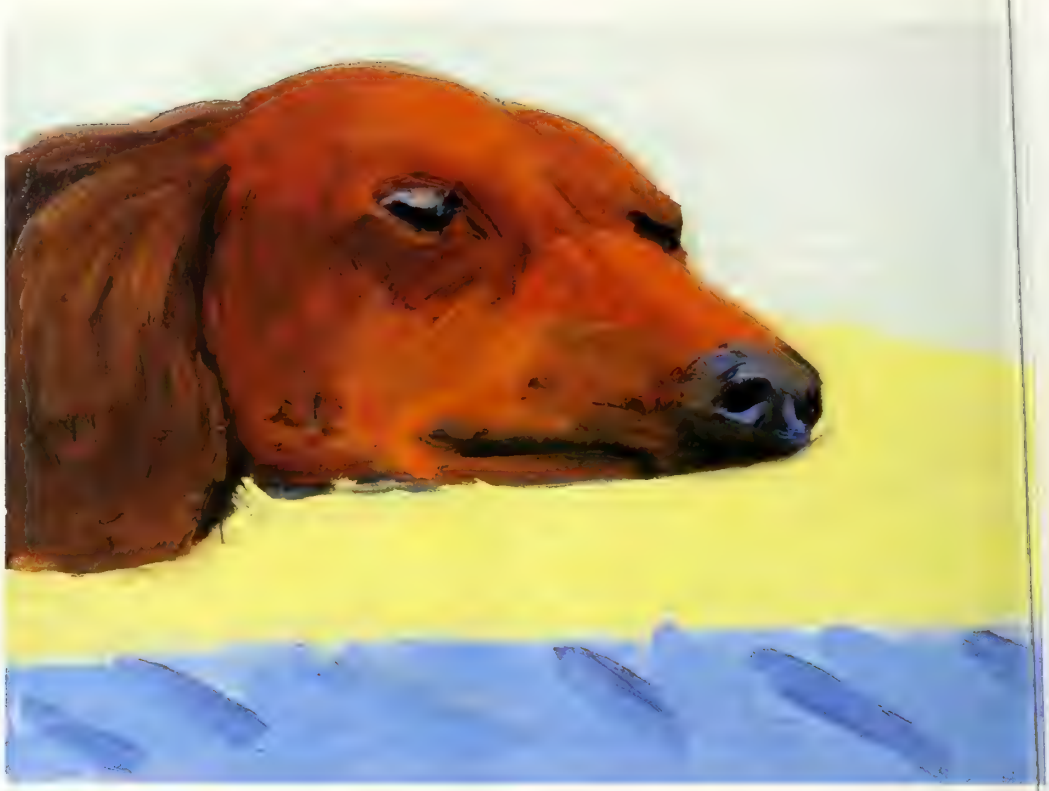
Probably to the surprise of some of those who knew me as a child, I have turned out to be gainfully employed. I remember when I was in seventh grade, one of my teachers said to me, strongly disapproving, "The trouble with you is you only do what you want to do!" That continues to be the trouble with me, except that over the years I have wanted to do more and more.

My husband worked hard as a child, outIowa-ing the Iowans, if such a thing is possible. His dad had him mixing cement with a stick when he was five, pushing wheelbarrows not long after. It's a long sad tale on the order of two miles to school and both ways uphill. The result is, he's a great worker, much better than I am, but all the while he's doing it he wishes he weren't. He thinks of it as work; he's torn between doing a good job and longing not to be doing it at all. Later, when he's out on the golf course, where he really wants to be, he feels a little guilty, knowing there's work that should have been done before he gave in and took advantage of the beautiful day.

Good work is not the work we assign children but the work they want to do, whether it's reading in bed (where would I be today if my parents had rousted me out and put me to scrubbing floors?) or cleaning their rooms or practicing the flute or making roasted potatoes with rosemary and Parmesan for the family dinner. It's good for a teenager to suddenly decide that the bathtub is so disgusting she'd better clean it herself. I admit that for the parent, this can involve years of waiting. But if she doesn't want to wait, she can always spend her time dusting.



From the Little Rock Free Press.



"Dog Painting 35," by David Hockney. From an exhibition of Hockney's recent work on display last month at the Louver gallery, in Venice, California.

[Poem]

FUNERAL MARCH OF ADOLF WOLFLI

From "The Funeral March of Adolf Wolfli," by Ted Deppe, in the Fall/Winter issue of Green Mountains Review. *Deppe drew on the life of Adolf Wolfli, a schizophrenic artist who died in an asylum in Switzerland in 1930; he invented the character of Lisa Becker, Wolfli's nurse. Deppe is the author, most recently, of* Children of the Air, *a collection of poetry published by Alice James Books.*

From an oral history of Lisa Becker taken in Bern, Switzerland, 1970

I found that art would keep him quiet. After breaking
a fellow patient's wrist, he'd been isolated for years on the West Wing—

I brought him colored pencils and newsprint and he drew all day,
or composed music in a system that God revealed to him.

For a time he thought he loved me.

For a time my face appeared in every drawing he made.

He wrote the "Santa Lisa Polka" for me, hardly danceable but,
in spite of the homemade paper trumpet he hummed it on, haunting

and mine. He said once that if I married him, he'd abdicate
his kingdom, write a waltz for me each day. Strange, then, after he died,

to search in vain through his 8,000-page *Funeral March,*
looking for something—anything—I could play before we buried him.

His masterpiece reached to the ceiling of his cell,
hand-sewn scores in which the music constantly gave way

to drawings or ads from magazines. What might have been eighth notes
floated above maps or rambling prayers

and then staves appeared with no notes at all—
this was the work he'd curse me for disturbing!

You have to picture me, the night before his funeral,
sorting through those composition books and finding no sustained melody—

But what did I expect? When he worked, he had a ritual
of rolling up his shirtsleeves and pant legs that took hours,

interrupted by his voices. He'd start drawing in the margins
and press inwards, filling each space, singing to himself like a boy.

Oh, he was more selfish than a child, incapable of loving anyone.
I never told him I wasn't married. I took care of him for thirty years,

longer than most marriages last! Such a strange, ugly man—
yellow-fingered and warp-nailed—our one-man Renaissance.

He'd consume his week's supply of pencils in three days,
then beg for more—against the doctor's orders I'd give them to him.

He signed his March, "St. Adolf, Chief Music Director, Painter, Handyman,
Explorer, Inventor of 160 original highly valuable inventions,

Commander of the 3rd Emmenthal Battalion, Alright!! Hunter,
Gardener, Victor of Giant Battles, Great God, Mental Patient, Casualty."

In some ways I was relieved when he died, as if a blizzard
finally howled away and I could start to shovel out.

He didn't want to leave a few perfect works behind him. He wanted to lift up
everything, wanted to give the whole dying world lasting form.

There were lucid moments when he knew that he was mad—
he could almost imagine what a normal life might be.

I'd go home and practice piano every night. I'd play Beethoven,
feel the moments things caught fire, but couldn't myself become flame.

Page upon page of his March, containing, he said, everything
and everyone he'd ever loved, and not a single tune

I could play for his funeral. Not even the "Santa Lisa Polka."
We buried him without music. There is nothing I blame myself for

more. We buried him without music and for two weeks I took to bed.
Then one night—it was snowing—I rolled up the sleeves of my nightdress.

I turned up the hem, pinned it like that, then puzzled
over a line of music that vanished in a field of painted irises,

purple flags instead of notes waving under a sky of sharps and flats.
I closed my eyes and began to play. I didn't know

what my hands were doing. Snow kept falling,
silences tumbled forward, winged notes

soared above the chipped ivory keys.
I played what I could of his *Funeral March*—

imperfectly, of course, only in fragments—I played
the *Funeral March of Adolf Wolfli*, everything dark, falling, silver.

[Interview]

A TRUE MINIMALIST

From an interview with Stewart Home, a British novelist and artist, in issue number 52 of Exquisite Corpse, *published in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The interview was conducted by Kirby Olson.*

KIRBY OLSON: You're famous for your Art Strike, in which you refused to make art for three years. How did that come about?

STEWART HOME: In 1982, I had no training and no discernible talent. I gave myself a limited amount of time to become a successful artist. A failure, I gave a talk in 1989 announcing a three-year period of cessation of artistic activities. I watched Kung Fu movies and wrote letters to friends instead. Everybody took notice of me. After three years of rest and relaxation, I was invited to talk at the Victoria and Albert Museum about the strike. This hiatus was very productive. All that time my reputation grew, and I didn't have to do anything.

[Story]

SQUEAK IN THE SYCAMORE

By Gordon Lish. From the Winter issue of Antioch Review. *Lish is editor of* The Quarterly *and the author, most recently, of* Zimzum, *a novel published by Pantheon.*

I want to tell you some fast things first about when I was little and then I am going to go ahead and tell you a story like everybody else. One is there was a tree out front and I heard things in it and I could not see up to the top of it and it made me scared I couldn't. Two is the man next door said come see my jonquils and I did not know if I should or not. Three is I went to bed with socks on and somebody came in and pulled off the covers and stood looking and crying and saying look at that. Four is Little Eugene had a slime spoon and they made it my job to be the one to have to go clean it off. Five is the butter-and-egg man died from adhesions. Six is the plumber died from getting electrocuted. Six is the gardener died from digging up a basilisk. Seven is the electrician died from a double hernia. Seven is the fruit-and-vegetable man died from his goiter getting wet. Eight is my second-grade teacher died from something. Nine is the sandwich man at the druggist's died from something else. Ten is the mailman died from kidney trouble and his wife. Eleven is the man who came to put the wallpaper up died from keeling over. Twelve is my mother died from stones in her cunt. Thirteen is my cousin Artie Sakowitz died from choking on ice water. Fourteen is Aunt Esther died, Aunt Dora died, Aunt Adele died, Aunt Pauline died, Aunt Miriam died, also Uncle Lou did, Uncle Sig did, Uncle Jack did, Tante Ida did, Tante Lily did, and so did a girl in my class from bending over too much, and so did a man from a sled hitting his head, and so did a dog, and so did Jesus. Lots of movie stars are dead. Rabbi Sandrow is dead. There are dead people from wars, from volcanoes, from floods, from earthquakes, from fires, from famine, from pestilence, bad food, bad habits, rash decisions, rushes to judgment, killer plants, death thoughts, from playing too much jump rope, from even just doing nothing. There is a bug that can make you die by walking on its back. There is a jellyfish that can swim in through your nose and then climb up into your brain and then eat your whole brain up. There is a lake that has bloodsuckers in it that can suck all of the blood out of somebody and nobody can get the bloodsuckers off of them even after all of the blood has been sucked out of them and there is no blood left in them for the bloodsuckers to anymore suck out of them. Did you know you can get somebody's hair stuck in your throat and suffocate from it? You can get hemorrhages. You can get dysplasia. You can get glossitis and herpetic stomatitis. You can get acute arterial thrombosis. Don't laugh. It's not funny. There's nothing funny about any of it. You think there's anything funny about obstructive uropathy? How about idiopathic long QT syndrome, you asshole! You think it's funny too? Fucking people with their fucking idea of what's hilarious! It makes me sick when somebody's got pericarditis with effusion and people start laughing about it and making wisecracks about it and carrying on like it's some kind of fucking joke or something.

People!

What makes people so absolutely so sickening?

Doesn't anybody know what makes people so sickening?

Okay, as to the story like everybody else:

Schmulevitz comes out of the doctor's office, and Mrs. Schmulevitz says to him, "So? So what is the verdict?"

"The verdict?" Schmulevitz says. He says, "You are asking me, Schmulevitz, what the verdict is? Because the answer is," he says, "not so hotsy-totsy, for your information. Because for your information, Mrs. Schmulevitz," Schmulevitz says to Mrs. Schmulevitz, "because for your information the man gives me two weeks tops."

"Two weeks tops?" Mrs. Schmulevitz says to Schmulevitz. She says to him, "You are telling me the verdict is two weeks tops? So what is the deal with the two weeks tops?" she says to Schmulevitz. "What, pray tell, is the condition with regard to the two weeks tops?" says Mrs. Schmulevitz.

"The ticker," says Schmulevitz. "The man says to me forget it, Schmulevitz, it's the ticker. Tops, the man says to me, you got two weeks, Schmulevitz, period. This is what the man says to me because of the ticker," says Schmulevitz.

"Well," says Mrs. Schmulevitz, "at least thank God it's not cancer."

So to you that's pretty fucking comic, right?

God, I cannot goddamn believe it. ■

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"Once, I carried concrete paving blocks."

– Attache of Terry C. Plauché, Landscape Architect, Mobile, Alabama

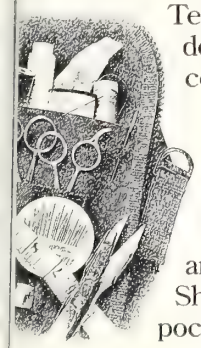
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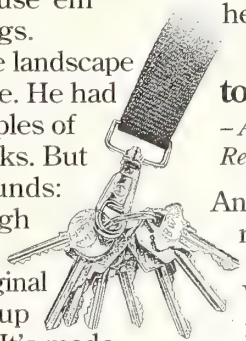


Then, there's Leah Witzig, the quilter, who travels to quilting conferences around the country. She likes all our pockets and dividers.

eah keeps me in stitches."

ttache of Leah Witzig, Quiltmaker, ate College, Pennsylvania

She stuffs them with fabrics, scissors, spools of thread, even her lunch.



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TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT

Notes on the progress of the American class war

By Michael Lind

Judging by the headlines that have been leading the news for the last several years, public debate in the United States at the end of the twentieth century has become a war of words among the disaffected minorities that so often appear on the never-ending talk show jointly hosted by Oprah, Larry King, Jenny Jones, and the McLaughlin Group. Conservatives at war with liberals; Christian fundamentalists at odds with liberal Jews; blacks at war with whites; whites at war with Hispanic immigrants; men at war with women; heterosexuals at war with homosexuals; and the young at war with the old. A guide to the multiple conflicts in progress would resemble the Personals pages in *The Village Voice*, with "versus" or "contra" substituted for "seeking" (Pro-Sex Classicists versus Anti-Sex Modernists).

The noise is deceptive. Off-camera, beyond the blazing lights, past the ropy tangle of black cords and down the hall, in the corner offices (on Capitol Hill as well as at General Electric, The Walt Disney Company, and CBS News), people in expensive suits quietly continue to go about the work of shifting the center of gravity of wealth and power in the United States from the discounted many to the privileged few. While public attention has been diverted to controversies as inflammatory as they are trivial—Should the Constitution be amended to ban flag-burning? Should dirty pictures be allowed on the Internet?—the American elites that subsidize and staff both the Republican and Democratic parties have steadfastly waged a generation-long class war against the middle and working classes. Now and then the television cameras catch a glimpse of what is going on, as they did last year during the NAFTA and GATT debates, when a Democratic President and a bipartisan majority in Congress collaborated in the sacrifice of American labor to the interests of Ameri-

Michael Lind is a senior editor of Harper's Magazine. *This essay was adapted from* The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution, *to be published by The Free Press in July.*

THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS SPARES NO PAINS IN PROMOTING THE BELIEF THAT IT DOES NOT EXIST

can corporations and foreign capital. More recently, with a candor rare among politicians, House Speaker Newt Gingrich argued against raising the minimum wage in the United States—on the grounds that a higher minimum wage would handicap American workers in their competition with workers *in Mexico*.

The camera, however, quickly returns to the set and the shouting audience, while assistant producers hold up placards with the theme for the day: the Contract with America, the New Covenant, Affirmative Action, Moral Renewal. It's against the rules to talk about a rapacious American oligarchy, and the suggestion that the small group of people with most of the money and power in the United States just *might* be responsible to some degree for what has been happening to the country over the last twenty years invariably invites the news media to expressions of wrath and denial. Whenever a politician proposes to speak for the many—whether he is on the left (Jerry Brown), right (Patrick Buchanan), or center (Ross Perot)—the Op-Ed pages in the nation's better newspapers (the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*) issue stern warnings of "demagogy." Yes, the pundits admit, economic and social inequality have been growing in the United States, with alarming results, but the ruling and possessing class cannot be blamed, because, well, there is no ruling and possessing class.



The American oligarchy spares no pains in promoting the belief that it does not exist, but the success of its disappearing act depends on equally strenuous efforts on the part of an American public anxious to believe in egalitarian fictions and unwilling to see what is hidden in plain sight. Anybody choosing to see the oligarchy in its native habitat need do nothing else but walk down the street of any big city to an office tower housing a major bank, a corporate headquarters or law firm, or a national television station. Enter the building and the multiracial diversity of the street vanishes as abruptly as the sound of the traffic. Step off the elevator at the top of the tower and apart from the clerical and maintenance staff hardly anybody is nonwhite. The contrast between the street and the tower is the contrast between the grass roots and the national headquarters, the field office and the home office. No matter what your starting point, the closer you come to the centers of American politics and society, the more everyone begins to look the same. Though corporate executives, shop stewards, and graduate-student lecturers could not be more different, the people who run big business bear a remarkable resemblance to the people who run big labor, who in turn might be mistaken for the people in charge of the media and the universities. *They are the same people*. They differ in their opinions—and in almost no other way. Almost exclusively white, disproportionately mainline Protes-

All photographs © Joel Sternfeld, courtesy Pace-MacGill Gallery, New York.

ant or Jewish, most of the members of the American elites went to one of ı dozen Ivy League colleges or top state universities. Not only do they ıave advanced professional or graduate degrees—J.D.'s, M.B.A.'s, Ph.D.'s, M.D.'s—but usually at least one of their parents (and sometimes both) has ıdvanced professional or graduate degrees. They dress the same. They talk he same. They walk the same. They have the same body language, the ame gestures. They eat the same food, drink the same drinks, and play the ame sports. They read the same publications. They . . . but I should say *we*. As a second-generation professional with an Ivy League diploma, having worked for liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, business lobbyists and pro-labor intellectuals, among professors and journalists and awyers and Foreign Service officers, I am a card-carrying member of the overclass. So, in all likelihood, reader, are you.

Amounting, with their dependents, to about 20 percent of the population,[1] this relatively new and still evolving political and social oligarchy is not identified with any particular region of the country. Homogeneous and nomadic, the overclass is the first truly national upper class in American history. In a managerial capitalist society like our own, the essential distinction is not between the "bourgeoisie" (the factory owners) and the "proletariat" (the factory workers) but between the credentialed minority (making a living from fees or wages supplemented by stock options) and the salaried majority. The salaried class—at-will employees, lacking a four-year college education, paid by the hour, who can be fired at any time—constitutes the real "middle class," accounting, as it does, for three-quarters of the population.

The white overclass, then, properly perceived, is neither a middle class nor a high bourgeoisie but a sort of guild oligarchy, like those that ran early modern Italian and Dutch city-states. Our latter-day oligarchs (lawyers, bankers, publishers, anchorpersons) are the contemporary equivalents of the plump and goateed syndics, haloed by starched collars, who gaze smugly back at us through honey veils of impasto from the paintings of Rembrandt and Hals. The precedent for our class war can't be found in the slapstick melee pitting thick-necked proles against top-hatted, umbrella-wielding bourgeois that enlivens Sergei Eisenstein's *Ten Days That Shook the World*. We should think, instead, of the civic discord between great guilds and lesser guilds—the bankers and merchants versus the artisans—that troubled cities like Florence and Milan in the Renaissance, and that resembled the struggle over universal health care between the insurance lobby and the AFL-CIO.

At least the syndics of Amsterdam and the Venetian families in the Golden Book did not add insult to injury by insisting that they were not "elites." The most remarkable thing about our own American oligarchy is the pretense that it doesn't constitute anything as definite as a social class. We prefer to assign good fortune to our individual merit, saying that we owe our perches in the upper percentiles of income and education not to our connections but solely to our own I.Q., virtue, brio, genius, *sprezzatura*, chutzpah, gumption. Had we been switched at birth by accident, had we grown up in a ghetto or barrio or trailer park, we would have arrived at our offices at ABC News or the Republican National Committee or the ACLU in more or less the same amount of time. The absence of black and Hispanic Americans in our schools and our offices and our clubs can only be explained, we tell ourselves, not by *our* extrinsic advantages but by *their* intrinsic defects. Compared with us (and perhaps with middle-class East Asian immigrants), most blacks and Hispanics must be disproportionately lazy, even (if Charles Murray and the late Richard Herrnstein are to be believed) disproportionately retarded. What other explanation for their failure to rise can there be? America, after all, is a classless society.

THE WHITE OVERCLASS IS NEITHER A MIDDLE CLASS NOR A HIGH BOURGEOISIE BUT A GUILD OLIGARCHY

[1] *Defined as individuals with professional or graduate education (which is roughly correlated with high income), and without counting dependents, the members of the overclass account for no more than 5 percent of the U.S. population.*

THE NEW AMERICAN OLIGARCHY HAS WAGED ITS WAR AGAINST THE WAGE-EARNING MAJORITY ON SEVERAL FRONTS

Or rather a two-class society. The belated acknowledgment of an "underclass" as a distinct group represents the only exception to the polite fiction that everyone in the United States, from a garage mechanic to a rich attorney (particularly the rich attorney), belongs to the "middle class." Over the past decade the ghetto poor have been the topic of conversation at more candlelight-and-wine dinner parties than I can recall, but without looking at the program or the wine list it is impossible to tell whether one is among nominal liberals or nominal conservatives. The same kind of people in the same kind of suits go on about "the blacks" as though a minority within an 12 percent minority were taking over the country, as if Washington were Pretoria and New York a suburb of Johannesburg. Not only do the comfortable members of the overclass single out the weakest and least influential of their fellow citizens as the cause of all their sorrows but they routinely, and preposterously, treat the genuine pathologies of the ghetto—high levels of violence and illegitimacy—as the major problems facing a country with uncontrollable trade and fiscal deficits, a low savings rate, an obsolete military strategy, an anachronistic and corrupt electoral system, the worst system of primary education in the First World, and the bulk of its population facing long-term economic decline.

To be sure, upper classes in other societies have often fretted, sometimes to the point of panic, about the lower orders, and in Japan, as in Britain and France (to an even greater degree than in the United States), the people in charge tend to go to the same schools, not a dozen but one or two. But in those countries people at least acknowledge the existence of an upper stratum, and the public-school old-boy network or the *énarquate* retains some tradition of responsibility for the less fortunate, some sense of noblesse oblige based on self-preservation if not on superior morality. (As Disraeli observed in 1848, "The palace is not safe when the cottage is not happy.") Among all the industrial democracies, only in the United States do the members of the oligarchy absolve themselves with the comforting notion that their class does not exist. Willing to pursue collective economic interests but lacking any sense of a political commonwealth, the American overclass at the end of the twentieth century takes as its own what Adam Smith identified as "the vile maxim of the masters of mankind. . . . All for ourselves, and nothing for other people." The sentiment is heartfelt and bipartisan.

During the past generation, the prerogatives of our new oligarchy have been magnified by a political system in which the power of money to buy TV time has become a good deal more important than the power of labor unions or party bosses to mobilize voters. Supported by the news media, which it largely owns, the oligarchy has waged its war of attrition against the wage-earning majority on several fronts: regressive taxation, the expatriation of industry, and mass immigration. Regressive taxes like the Social Security payroll tax and state sales taxes shift much of the tax burden from the rich to middle-income Americans. After the Reagan-era tax reforms, 75 percent of the American people owed more taxes than they would have owed had the 1977 tax laws been left untouched; only the wealthiest 5 percent of the public received any significant benefit from the tax cuts. Continuing the program, Newt Gingrich's Republicans are sponsoring yet another windfall for the wealthy. Under the tax-cut legislation passed by the House, which Gingrich called the "crown jewel" of the Contract with America, individuals earning $350,000 a year would receive a tax reduction of $13,000, while families making $30,000 a year would get only 50 cents a day. (Some crown. Some jewel.)[2]

[2] *In the version of the Contract with America legislation first passed by the House, two thirds of the spending cuts would come from programs for low-income families, while roughly half the money from the cuts would go to the wealthiest 10 percent of American households. Fully one fifth of the savings would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of families.*

Owing in large part to the bipartisan preference for regressive over progressive taxation, and despite the cries of anguish from Senator Phil Gramm and the editorial writers employed by the *Wall Street Journal*, the United States now stands second to last among the major industrialized countries in the rate of taxation on income—and dead last in terms of economic equality. The replacement of progressive income taxation by a flat tax, along with the adoption of national sales taxes (reforms favored by many conservative Democrats as well as Republicans), would further shift the national tax burden from the credentialed minority to the wage-earning majority. Average Americans have not only been taxed *instead* of the rich; they have been taxed to *repay* the rich. Borrowing, which accounted for only 5.3 percent of federal spending in the 1960s, increased to 29.9 percent in the 1990s. Interest payments on the debt (which last year amounted to $203 billion) represent a transfer of wealth from ordinary American taxpayers to rich Americans and foreigners without precedent in history.

On the second front of the class war, corporate elites continue to use the imperatives of global free trade as a means of driving down American wages and nullifying the social contract implicit in both the New Deal and the Great Society. U.S. corporations now lead the world in the race to low-wage countries with cheap and politically repressed labor forces. Concentrated in "export-processing zones" in Third World countries, and usually not integrated into the local economy, much of the transnational investment brings together foreign capital and technology with inexpensive and docile labor to manufacture consumer electronics, shoes, luggage, or toys. The export-processing zone is nothing new; it used to be called the plantation. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, plantations owned by American, British, and European investors produced raw materials and agriculture for export; modern technology now permits factory work to be done in the same countries. The banana republic is being replaced by the sweatshop republic as national, middle-class capitalism gives way to global plantation capitalism.

UNDER GLOBAL PLANTATION CAPITALISM, THE BANANA REPUBLIC IS GIVING WAY TO THE SWEATSHOP REPUBLIC



Many advocates of free trade claim that higher productivity growth in the United States will offset any downward pressure on wages caused by the global sweatshop economy, but the appealing theory falls victim to an unpleasant fact. Productivity *has* been going up in America, without resulting wage gains for American workers. Between 1977 and 1992, the average productivity of American workers increased by more than 30 percent, while the average real wage *fell* by 13 percent. The logic is inescapable. No matter how much productivity increases, wages will fall if there is an abundance of workers competing for a scarcity of jobs—an abundance of the sort created by the globalization of the labor pool for U.S.-based corporations.[3]

Even skilled production often can be done more cheaply elsewhere. Software research and design is now being done by local computer specialists in India, in Russia, and in Poland. Since 1979, the real wages of

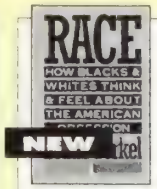
[3] *According to Common Cause, the leading first-time contributor to the Republican National Committee since the 1994 congressional elections, Fruit of the Loom, gave $100,000 to the RNC in February 1995, three days before the House Ways and Means trade subcommittee held hearings on a bill to ease quotas on low-wage Caribbean countries in which the corporation has commercial ventures. The subcommittee approved the measure.*

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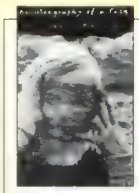
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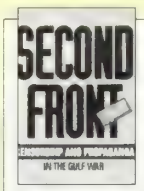
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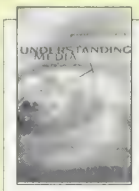
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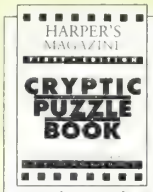


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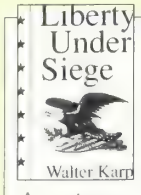
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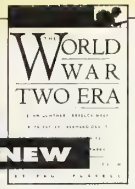
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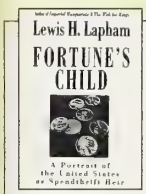
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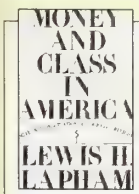
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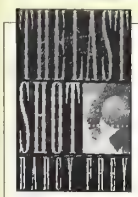
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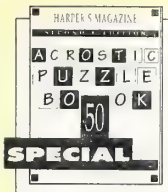
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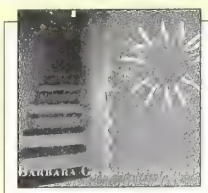
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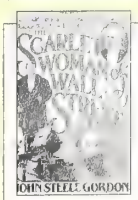
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IF MASS IMMIGRATION ENDED, MEMBERS OF THE WHITE OVERCLASS WOULD HAVE TO PAY HIGHER WAGES, FEES, AND TIPS

high school dropouts have declined by 20 percent, while the incomes of workers with more than four years of college have risen by 8 percent. There are two ways to interpret the better performance of professionals relative to other workers in the new, internationalized economy. The most common explanation (the one preferred by the overclass and its publicists in the major news media) is that the world economy, in some vague way, rewards expertise and high-tech skills—though if this were so, one would expect multilingual physicists to be growing spectacularly rich rather than bond traders, corporate vice presidents, and partners in large law firms, whose skills have little or nothing to do with high technology. A more plausible explanation is that professionals in the United States benefit from a vigorously enforced form of protectionism based on credentials and licensing. A corporation can hire an Indian computer programmer to do the work of an American computer programmer for a fraction of the wage, but it cannot hire an Indian lawyer to try a case in the United States. Permit legal briefs to be written in India and submitted to American courts by fax from Indian lawyers, and legal fees in the United States would quickly plummet, the skill, education, and productivity of American lawyers notwithstanding.

Not all nonprofessional jobs can be expatriated to Mexico or Malaysia, and a great many low-skilled services—from truck driving to nursing and sales and restaurant work—still must be performed in America. Accordingly, on a third front of the class war, the American gentry support a generous immigration policy. Enlarging the low-skill labor pool in the United States has the same effect as enlarging the labor pool through the expatriation of American-owned industry. From the point of view of members of the white overclass, of course, this is good news—if mass immigration ended tomorrow, they would probably have to pay higher wages, fees, and tips. In the 1980s, during the "Massachusetts Miracle," the state's unemployment rate fell to half the national average, 2.2 percent. As a result of a tight labor market, wages for workers at McDonald's rose to more than $7 an hour. So unfortunate a development prompted a study from the Twentieth Century Fund in which author Thomas Muller took note of the awful consequences: "In many areas of the Northeast, a scarcity of clerks in the late 1980s caused a noticeable deterioration in service. . . . This is not an argument that long lines or *flip behavior by salespeople* will fundamentally affect America's well-being, but they do constitute an irritant that can diminish the quality of our life [emphasis added]." In a seller's market for labor, it seems, there is a danger that the help will get uppity.

"As the number of working mothers increases," Muller wrote, "such [household] help, once considered a luxury, is becoming more and more a necessity. Were it not for recent immigrants, nannies, maids, and gardeners would be a vanishing breed . . ." Although the vast majority of Americans still do not consider the employment of "nannies, maids, or gardeners" to be a necessity rather than a luxury, the 1 percent of the population that employs live-in servants (c.f., the recent difficulties of Zoe Baird, Kimba Wood, and Arianna Huffington) cannot enjoy an appropriate degree of comfort without a supporting cast of deferential helots. Our own overclass Americans are as dependent on Latina maids as were the members of the nineteenth-century Northeastern establishment on Irish "Bridgets" and the antebellum Southern planters on house slaves. (In this connection, J. P. Morgan's definition of the leisure class, which he saw as the bulwark of civilization, is instructive: "All those who can afford to hire a maid.")

The *Wall Street Journal*, ever mindful of the short-run interests of the overclass, has called for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution consisting of five words: "There shall be open borders." If the United States and Mexican labor markets were merged (together with the capital markets already integrated by NAFTA), then American investment would flow south to take advantage of cheap labor, and tens of millions of Mexican workers would migrate north to better-paying jobs, until wages stabilized

somewhere above the contemporary Mexican level (between $4 and $5 a day) but below the current American minimum wage of $4.25 an hour. The numbers of the white overclass would remain fixed, while the pool of cheap labor expanded, and Muller's dream of heaven would come true: every American who is not a maid or gardener might be able to afford one.

Although the inequalities of income in the United States are now greater than at any time since the 1930s, and although numerous observers have remarked on the fact and cited abundant statistics in support of their observations, the response of the American overclass has been to blame everybody but its nonexistent self—to blame the ghetto, or the schools, or the liberal news media, or the loss of family values. In a characteristic argument that appeared in early April on the Op-Ed page of the *Washington Post* ("Raising the Minimum Wage Isn't the Answer"), James K. Glassman dismissed the idea that public policy can help the majority of workers whose real wages continue to fall: "[T]he ultimate answer lies with workers themselves. . . . Government can help a bit through tax breaks for education, but ultimately the cure for low working wages may be nothing more mysterious than high personal diligence."

In any other democracy, an enraged citizenry probably would have rebelled by now against a national elite that weakens unions, slashes wages and benefits, pits workers against low-wage foreign and immigrant competition—and then informs its victims that the chief source of their economic problems is a lack of "high personal diligence." But for whom could an enraged citizen vote? The American overclass manages to protect itself from popular insurgencies, not only through its ownership of the news media but also by its financial control of elections and its use of affirmative-action patronage.

Of the three defenses, the uniquely corrupt American system of funding elections is by far the most important, which is no doubt why campaign finance reform was left out of the Contract with America. The real two-party system in the United States consists not of the Democrats and the Republicans but of the party of voters and the party of donors. The donor party is extraordinarily small. Roughly 10 percent of the American people make political contributions, most of them in minimal amounts. The number of large political donors is even smaller. Citizen Action, an independent consumer group, found that in the 1989–90 election cycle only 179,677 individual donors gave contributions equal to or greater than $200 to a federal candidate: "Thirty-four percent of the money spent by federal candidates was directly contributed by no more than one tenth of one percent of the voting age population." One may reasonably doubt that this one tenth of one percent is representative of the electorate or the population at large.

We were taught in civics classes that the United States is a "pluralistic" democracy in which Madisonian "factions" balance one another, ensuring that no single minority or economic interest will prevail. We were lied to. Labor does not balance big business; consumer groups do not balance big business; *nobody* balances big business anymore. Contrary to conservative claims that liberal and left-wing "special interests" dominate Congress, PAC funds come, overwhelmingly, from business. Citizens vote occasionally; dollars vote continually. During the first two months of this year, "soft money" contributions, chiefly from industry, flowed into the coffers of the Republican National Committee at the rate of $123,121 per day, and during the recently ended two-year congressional campaign cycle, then Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt (D., Mo.) accumulated PAC money in the amount of $1,001,400, while Speaker Newt Gingrich (R., Ga.) received $763,220. As recently as last April, President Clinton appeared at a $50,000-a-couple fund-raiser at Steven Spielberg's home in Hollywood. Because the same economic oli-

THE REAL TWO-PARTY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES CONSISTS OF THE PARTY OF VOTERS AND THE PARTY OF DONORS

THE WHITE OVERCLASS PITS AMERICANS OF DIFFERENT RACES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN ZERO-SUM STRUGGLES FOR GOVERNMENT PATRONAGE

garchy subsidizes almost all of our politicians, our political fights are as inconsequential as TV wrestling.

Armed with the political advantage secured by the purchase of congressmen, senators, and presidents, the overclass shores up its defense against genuinely representative democracy (i.e., a popular coalition uniting middle-class and working-class Americans of all races and regions) by adopting a strategy of divide and rule expressed in the language of multiculturalism. The dynamics of a divided society similar to our own were noted in 1947 by Gunnar Myrdal: "In a society where there are broad social classes and, in addition, more minute distinctions and splits in the lower strata, *the lower class groups will to a great extent take care of keeping each other subdued*, thus relieving to that extent the higher classes of this otherwise painful task necessary to the monopolization of its power and advantages." Centuries before today's multiculturalists adopted the slogan "Celebrate diversity," William Smith, a slave trader, explained his reasons for celebrating diversity among the exploited:

> As for the languages of *Gambia*, they are so many and so different, that the Natives, on either side of the River, cannot understand each other; which, if rightly consider'd, is no small Happiness to the *Europeans* who go thither to trade for slaves. . . . [T]he safest Way is to trade with the different Nations, on either side of the River, and having some of every Sort on board, there will be no more Likelihood of their succeeding in a Plot than of finishing the Tower of Babel.

Unified along the lines of economic interest, the wealthy American minority hold the fragmented majority at bay by pitting blacks against whites in zero-sum struggles for government patronage and by bribing potential black and Hispanic leaders, who might otherwise propose something other than rhetorical rebellion, with the gifts of affirmative action. The policy was promoted by Richard Nixon, who, as much as any American politician, deserves to be acknowledged as the father of racial preferences.

"What most militants want," Nixon explained in 1968, using the language of gangsterism to support his proposal for minority contracting preferences, "is not separation, but to be included in . . . to have a share of the wealth, and a piece of the action." Racial-preference policies give middle-class and wealthy blacks and Hispanics "a share of the wealth and a piece of the action." The ritual that symbolizes civil-rights "progress" in today's oligarchic America is the "integration" of an all-white country club, which invariably means admitting one of the wealthiest black citizens who can be found in the local community. Similarly, in the matter of presidential Cabinet posts, diversity means appointing rich professionals educated in the Ivy League who happen to belong to different races and sexes.

The Ivy League, in its turn, rigs its admissions policies to disproportionately benefit well-off black and Hispanic Americans (at Harvard, for example, 70 percent of black undergraduates are the children of parents in managerial or professional fields, while at Cornell twice as many minority students, in some years, come from the suburbs as from the cities). In order not to lose accreditation, most colleges and universities try to have approximately as many black students as there are black Americans in the general population, around 12 percent. These goals and timetables can be met only by drastically lowering admissions standards for black students, who for obvious historical reasons are far less academically prepared than many of their white competitors.[4]

[4] *In 1989 a black high school graduate in California with the minimum high school GPA had a 70 percent chance of being accepted to Berkeley, while a white high school student with the same score had only a 9 percent chance of admission. Between 1985 and 1990, the average LSAT score for white students admitted to the University of Texas Law School was in the ninety-second percentile as compared with the fifty-fifth percentile for black students. This enormous gap gives the lie to the argument that affirmative action affects only marginally qualified whites—the "margin" in this case is thirty-seven percentile points.*

"To get past racism, we must here take account of race," McGeorge Bundy, the former aide to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, declared magisterially in "The Issue Before the Court: Who Gets Ahead in America?", an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* that appeared in November 1977 during the formative period of affirmative action in college admissions. Bundy could afford to be generous in redistributing opportunities from middle-class whites to middle-class blacks and Hispanics because so many members of his class are safely insulated from the effects of racial preference by the largest affirmative-action program in the United States: legacy preference.[5]

LEGACY PREFERENCE, THE LARGEST AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES, BENEFITS THE CHILDREN OF THE OVERCLASS



Legacies, or children of alumni, are three times more likely to be accepted to Harvard than other high school graduates with the same (sometimes better) scores (at Harvard, the dean of admissions reads legacy applications—but not those of non-legacies). Children of Yale graduates are two and a half times more likely than non-alumni kin to be admitted to Yale. According to a former Princeton dean of admissions, legacies at "one Ivy League university" had average SAT scores of 1,280, compared with the average of 1,350 out of a possible 1,600 for the total freshman class.[6]

As the number of black and Hispanic students at selective universities and partners in prestigious law firms is artificially maintained, the average wages of black and Hispanic workers, along with those of white workers, continue to stagnate or decline. The tokenism embodied in racial preference and multiculturalism is thus about as threatening to the American elite as an avant-garde sculpture in the lobby of a bank.

Meanwhile, behind the Potemkin Village facade of contemporary America, with its five separate-but-equal official races and its racially authentic folk art, the American oligarchy goes busily about the work of

[5] *Bundy was born into a rich Boston Brahmin family. On his mother's side, he was kin to the influential Lowells. His father, Harvey H. Bundy, a partner in the elite Boston law firm of Choate, Hall and Stewart, succeeded John Foster Dulles as board chairman of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. After attending Groton and Yale, McGeorge Bundy became dean of Harvard College. His older brother William, married Dean Acheson's daughter; his sister Katherine was related by marriage to Jacqueline Onassis and Louis Auchincloss.*

[6] *The late Christopher Lasch, in* The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy *(W.W. Norton, 1995), excerpted in the November 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine, *describes "the professional and managerial class" as a "meritocracy" or "an aristocracy of talent." However, the fact that the white overclass, by means of legacy preference, has rigged higher education in its favor proves that it is afraid of genuine meritocracy.*

THE HAPPY FEW WILL ZOOM OVERHEAD ON PRIVATE TOLL ROADS WHILE ORDINARY AMERICANS FUME IN TRAFFIC ON CRUMBLING PUBLIC STREETS

constructing its own enclave society, an America-within-America, linked to the international economy and detached from the destiny of the native middle class. What Lewis Lapham has called "the new feudalism" reverses the trend of the past thousand years toward the government's provision of basic public goods like policing, public roads and transport networks, and public schools. In the United States—to a degree unmatched in any other industrial democracy—these public goods are once again becoming private luxuries, accessible only to the affluent few. Federal spending declined in the 1980s for services like law enforcement and government (by 42 percent), for education and training (by 40 percent), and for the transportation infrastructure (by 32 percent); and most of the growth in government spending in recent decades has taken the form of non-means-tested entitlements, like Social Security and Medicare, that benefit middle- and upper-income Americans.

If the notion of a neo-feudal United States seems far-fetched, consider the "feudal" elements of modern America. Increasing numbers of affluent white Americans have been withdrawing into gated suburbs, many of them indistinguishable from private cities, whose community associations provide not only security but trash collection, street cleaning, and utilities. The inhabitants have sought permission from local governments to block off public streets with gates and other barriers to traffic (a California appeals court recently ruled that seven metal gates installed by the Los Angeles suburb of Whitley Heights represented an illegal "return to feudal times"—but only *after* their installation had been approved by the Los Angeles City Council). Some of the richer residents within the walls seek not only permission to barricade themselves but exemption from taxes—on the argument that taxes for public municipal services on top of the fees they pay their private community associations constitute "double taxation."

Because the affluent would rather hire mercenary forces than pay for police, the number of private security guards in the United States now exceeds the number of publicly employed policemen. To help those who cannot afford to rent police officers, the right is trying to make it easier to carry concealed weapons at the mall, in the office, and on the subway; holsters and body armor may once again become fashion accessories. A chorus of conservative voices proposes the replacement of public schools with taxpayer-subsidized vouchers to private schools, and the idea of replacing the national highway system with private toll roads is not a fantasy confined to dystopian science fiction. More than ten states now have projects for such roads, which would allow the happy few to drive their expensive cars on state-of-the-art computer-enhanced highways while ordinary Americans fume in traffic on crumbling public streets.

The new American urban architecture reflects the same evolution of American society from republicanism to feudalism. Downtown office complexes begin to resemble medieval castles—collections of towers connected by skyways and sealed off from the growing horde of the unemployable poor. The celebrated architect Frank Gehry specializes in what cultural critic Mike Davis calls "carceral" architecture—for example, "stealth houses" for the wealthy, hiding their opulent interiors from thieves behind plain gray walls. Gehry's 1984 Goldwyn Branch Library in Hollywood (inspired by the same architect's fortified U.S. Chancellery in Damascus, a building bristling with ten-foot steel stakes and stylized sentry boxes) prompted Davis to describe it as "probably the most menacing library ever built, a bizarre hybrid of a drydocked dreadnaught and a cavalry fort."

The dream of withdrawal probably explains the enthusiasm in overclass circles for the "virtual corporation," a dematerialized entity consisting

solely of a small management team temporarily contracting out work, here to Mexicans and South Koreans, there to Hungarians and Czechs, in the manner of the nabobs who lived it up in eighteenth-century London on their rents from Caribbean plantations run on their behalf by thuggish overseers. This is the vision expressed by the television commercials for IBM and the American Express Card and the magazine advertisements for new computers and fax machines that show a middle-aged executive communicating with his office from a beach resort or a corporate lawyer tucking in her child via a videophone in a busy airport. Virtual capitalism thus meets the virtual family in the utopia of the American overclass: Dad will bask in the Caribbean sun sketching out marketing designs on his laptop computer while Mom keeps an eye on Baby, via satellite, as she flies from New York to Frankfurt to Tokyo. Off-camera, never seen, is the Latina maid who actually changes Baby's diapers, and, in this or that Third World shantytown of tin roofs and open sewers, the employees, or rather the independent contractors, of Dad's or Mom's virtual corporation, workers as likely as not without benefits, without insurance, without civil rights, without a voice in their governments, laboring to make products they can never afford to buy.

Some American executives have begun to follow the factories to Fortunate Isles. The *Wall Street Journal* and *Fortune* recently portrayed, with considerable sympathy, a number of rich American expatriates, among them the heirs to the Dart container and Campbell's soup fortunes, who have renounced their U.S. citizenship and begun new lives in more humane societies, like the Turks and Caicos Islands and Belize. Senator Phil Gramm last spring denounced a proposal to tax these expatriates as a measure reminiscent of "Nazi Germany," apparently secure in the belief that the old American republican ideal of civic obligation is nothing but totalitarianism in disguise. No doubt, when the overclass revolution is completed, persecuted tycoons will no longer be driven out of their hostile homeland. In *America libre,* it will no longer be necessary to move to Jamaica to be able to afford maids and chauffeurs on a lawyer's salary, or to relocate production to Honduras in order to pay the working classes no more than a few cents an hour (House Majority Leader Dick Armey favors abolishing the minimum wage). North America shall come to resemble Columbus's mistaken perception of it as simply one more Caribbean island populated by dusky masses born to be servants. The United States, which the eighteenth-century American elite sought to refashion as a new Roman Republic, and which the nineteenth-century American patriciate conceived of as a new and greater Britain, shall be renovated by the new white overclass as a New Honduras or a New Belize.

Until that blessed day, the bipartisan white overclass, secure behind urban fronts and suburban walls, as well as the metaphorical moats of legacy preference, expensive schooling, and an impregnable interest rate, has neither reason nor incentive to moderate its ruthless pursuit of its own short-term concerns. In a more homogeneous society, the growing concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a privileged minority might be expected to produce a strong reaction on the part of the majority. In present-day America, however, no such reaction is likely to take place. Although heavily outnumbered, the unified few rest secure in the knowledge that any insurgency will almost certainly dissipate in quarrels among the fragmented many rather than in open rebellion; during the 1992 Los Angeles riots, black, Hispanic, and white rioters turned on Korean middlemen rather than march on Beverly Hills. The belligerent guests on the never-ending talk show, urged on by the screaming audience, will continue to enact allegorical conflicts, while, off-camera and upstairs, the discreet members of the class that does not exist ponder the choice of marble or mahogany for the walls of the executive suite from which they command. ■

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THIS PEN FOR HIRE

On grinding out papers for college students

By Abigail Witherspoon

I am an academic call girl. I write college kids' papers for a living. Term papers, book reports, senior theses, take-home exams. My "specialties": art history and sociology, international relations and comparative literature, English, psychology, "communications," Western philosophy (ancient and contemporary), structural anthropology, film history, evolutionary biology, waste management and disposal, media studies, and pre-Confederation Canadian history. I throw around allusions to Caspar Weinberger and Alger Hiss, Sacco and Vanzetti, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, Joel Steinberg and Baby M. The teaching assistants eat it up. I can do simple English or advanced jargon. Like other types of prostitutes, I am, professionally, very accommodating.

I used to tell myself I'd do this work only for a month or two, until I found something else. But the official unemployment rate in this large Canadian city where I live is almost 10 percent, and even if it were easy to find a job, I'm American, and therefore legally prohibited from receiving a paycheck. So each day I walk up the stairs of a rotting old industrial building to an office with a sign on the window: TAILORMADE ESSAYS, WRITING AND RESEARCH. The owner, whom I'll call Matthew, claims that he started the business for ghostwriters, speechwriters, and closet biographers, and only gradually moved into academic work as a sideline. But even Grace, the oldest surviving writer on Tailormade's staff, can't remember anybody ever writing much other than homework for students at one university or another.

This is a good city for Tailormade. Next door is the city's university and its tens of thousands of students, a school that was once somewhat better when not all of its computer-registered classes numbered in the hundreds. Orders come in from Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg. There are plenty of essay services in the States, of course; they advertise in campus newspapers and the back pages of music magazines. Some of the big ones have toll-free phone numbers. They're sprinkled all over: California, Florida, New Jersey. But we still get American business too. Orders come in here from Michigan, Vermont, Pennsylvania; from Illinois, Wisconsin, upstate New York, sometimes California; from Harvard, Cornell, and Brown. They come in from teachers' colleges, from people calling themselves "gifted students" (usually teenagers at boarding schools), and, once in a while, from the snazzy places some of our customers apparently vacation with their divorced dads, like Paris.

Matthew runs the business with his wife, Sylvia. Or maybe she is his ex-wife, nobody's exactly sure. When you call Tailormade—it's now in the phone book—you hear Sylvia say that Tailormade is Canada's foremost essay service; that our very qualified writers handle most academic subjects; and that we are fast, efficient, and completely confidential. Sylvia speaks loud-

Abigail Witherspoon is, of necessity, a pseudonym. Were the writer to be identified, she could be fired or deported. Accordingly, the name of her employers and their company, as well as the names of other individuals mentioned in this article, have been changed.

ly and slowly and clearly, especially to Asian customers. She is convinced that everyone who phones the office will be Asian, just as she's convinced that all Asians drive white Mercedes or black BMWs with cellular phones in them. From my personal experience, I find the Asian customers at least more likely to have done the assigned reading.

THE OWNER CALLS TO THE WRITERS LIKE AN AUCTIONEER: "ROOT CAUSES OF THE UKRAINIAN FAMINE? HENRY, THAT FOR YOU?"

Matthew and Sylvia are oddly complementary. Matthew, gentle and fumbly, calls out mechanically, "Thank you, sir, ma'am, come again" after each departing back slinking down the hall. Sylvia asks the Chinese customers loudly, "SIMPLE ENGLISH?" She tells the uncertain, "Well, don't show up here till you know what you want," and demands of the dissatisfied, "Whaddya mean you didn't like it? You ordered it, din'cha?"

This afternoon, October 10, I'm here to hand in a paper and fight it out with the other writers for more assignments. Some of us are legal, some aren't. Some have mortgages and cars, some don't. All of us are hungry. The office is jammed, since it's almost time for midterms. Tailormade does a brisk business from October to May, except for January. The chairs are full of customers studiously filling out order forms. You can always tell who is a student and who is a writer. The students are dressed elegantly and with precision; the writers wear ripped concert T-shirts or stained denim jackets with white undershirts peeking out. The students wear mousse and hair gel and nail polish and Tony Lama western boots and Tourneau watches and just the right amount of makeup. They smell of Escape, Polo for men, and gum. The writers smell of sweat, house pets, and crushed cigarettes. Four of the other writers are lolling in their chairs and fidgeting; work usually isn't assigned until all the order forms have been filled out, unless somebody requests a topic difficult to fill. Then Matthew will call out like an auctioneer: "Root Causes of the Ukrainian Famine? Second year? Anyone? Grace?" or "J. S. Mill's Brand of Humane Utilitarianism? Third year? Henry, that for you?" as some customer hovers in front of the desk, eyes straight ahead. Someone else in the room might idly remark that he or she took that course back in freshman year and it was a "gut" or a "real bird."

I suspect that each of us in the Tailormade stable of hacks sorts out the customers differently: into liberal-arts students and business students; into those that at least do the reading and those that don't bother; into those that have trouble writing academic English and those that just don't care about school; into those that do their assignments in other subjects and those that farm every last one of them out to us; into the struggling and inept versus the rich, lazy, and stupid. But for Matthew and Sylvia, the clientele are divisible, even before cash versus credit card, or paid-up versus owing, into Asian customers and non-Asian ones. There's been an influx of wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong in recent years, fleeing annexation. Matthew and Sylvia seem to resent their presence and, particularly, their money. Yet they know that it's precisely this pool of customers—who have limited written English language skills but possess education, sophistication, ambition, cash, and parents leaning hard on them for good grades—that keeps the business going.

When I hand in my twelve pages on "The Role of Market Factors in the Development of the Eighteenth-Century Fur Trade," Matthew tells me, "This lady's been patiently waiting without complaining." I must be very late. Turning to the client, he picks up one of my sheets and waves it. "At least it's a nice bib," he points out to her. "Look at that." Although I wasn't provided with any books for this essay, I managed to supply an extensive bibliography. I can't remember what I put on it.

I'm still waiting for an assignment. In fact, all the writers are still waiting. We often wait at the bar around the corner; Tailormade has its own table there, permanently reserved. But we all have to get ourselves to the office eventually to pick up assignments. Grace, the oldest writer and by now, probably, the best, sits sorrowfully by the window, her long gray hair falling into her lap and her head jammed into her turtleneck, on her thin face a look of permanent tragedy. Grace gets up at three in the morning to work; she never forgets a name, a fact, or an assignment; she has a deep, strange love for Japanese history and in ten years here has probably hatched enough pages and research for several doctoral dissertations in that field. Elliott, another writer, reclines near the door, his little dog asleep under his chair. He uses the dog as an icebreaker with the clients, especially young women. He is six and a half feet tall and from somewhere far up in the lunar landscape of northern Ontario. He has a huge head of blond hair down to his eyes and pants as tight as a rock star's. Elliott is the business writer. He specializes in finance, investment, management, and economics. He lives out of a suitcase; he and the little dog,



perhaps practicing fiscal restraint, seem to stay with one of a series of girlfriends. When the relationship comes to an end, Elliott and the little dog wind up back in the office, where they sleep in the fax room and Elliott cranks out essays on his laptop. Henry and Russell, two other writers, twist around, changing position, the way travelers do when they're trying to nap on airport lounge chairs. They both look a little like El Greco saints, although perhaps it just seems that way to me because lately I've been doing a lot of art history papers. They both have long skinny legs, long thin white nervous twiddling hands, long thin faces with two weeks' worth of unintentional beard. Henry points out how good Russell looks, and we all agree. Russell is forty. He has a new girlfriend half his age who has, he says, provided a spiritual reawakening. Before he met her, Russell drank so much and held it so badly that he had the distinction of being the only staff member to be banned from the bar around the corner for life. Henry, by contrast, looks terrible. He's always sick, emaciated, coughing, but he invariably manages to meet his deadlines, to make his page quotas, and to show up on time. We used to have another writer on staff, older even than Russell or Grace, who smoked a pipe, nodded a lot, and never said anything. He was a professor who'd been fired from some school, we were never really sure where. Eventually, he went AWOL and started an essay-writing service of his own. He's now Tailormade's main competition. The only other competitors, apparently, worked out of a hot-dog stand parked next to a campus bookstore. Nobody knows whether they're open anymore.

In general, there is a furtiveness about the way we writers talk to one another, the way we socialize. In the office, we're a little like people who know each other from A.A. meetings or rough trade bars encountering each other on a Monday morning at the photocopy machine. It's not because we're competing for work. It's not even because some of us are illegal and everyone else knows it. It is, if anything, collective embarrassment. We know a lot more than Matthew and Sylvia do. They sit dumbly as we bullshit with the clients about their subjects and assignments ("Ah, introductory psychology! The evolution of psychotherapy is a fascinating topic . . . ever read a guy called Russell Jacoby?") in order to impress them and get them to ask for us. This must be the equivalent of the harlots' competitive bordello promenade. But we work for Matthew and Sylvia. They have the sense to pit us against each other, and it works. We can correct their pronunciation of "Goethe" and they don't care. They know it makes no difference. I suspect they have never been farther away than Niagara Falls; neither of them may have even finished high school. It doesn't matter. The laugh's on us, of course: they own the business.

OCTOBER 12, 1994. A tall gangly kid comes in for a twenty-page senior history essay about the ancient local jail. It involves research among primary sources in the provincial archives, and I spend a week there, going page by page through the faded brown script of the warden's prison logbooks of the 1830s. Agitators are being executed for "high treason" or "banished from the realm," which, I assume, means being deported. Once in a while there's a seductive joy to a project. You forget that you've undertaken it for money, that it isn't yours.

Most of the time, though, all I think about is the number of pages done, the number to go. Tailormade charges twenty dollars Canadian a page for first- and second-year course assignments, twenty-two a page for third- and fourth-year assignments, twenty-four for "technical, scientific, and advanced" topics. "Technical, scientific, and advanced" can mean nu-

Illustrations by Russell O. Jupe



clear physics, as it does in September when there is no business. Or it can mean anything Matthew and Sylvia want it to, as it does in March. Most major spring-term essays are due when final exams begin, in April, and so in March kids are practically lined up in the office taking numbers and spilling out into the hall. The writers get half, in cash: ten and eleven bucks a page; twelve for the technical, scientific, and advanced.

There's one other charge: if the client doesn't bring in her or his own books, except in September and January, she or he is "dinged," charged an extra two dollars a page for research. When the writers get an assignment, we ask if there are books. If there are, it saves us time, but we have to lug them home, and often they're the wrong books. If there are no books, we have to go to the libraries and research the paper ourselves. "Client wants twelve pages on clinical social work intervention," Matthew and Sylvia might tell us. "She has a reading list but no books. I think we can ding her." "He wants a book report on something called *Gravity's Rainbow*? Doesn't have the book, though. I'm gonna ding him."

OCTOBER 13. I am assigned a paper on the French philosopher Michel Foucault. The client has been dinged; I have to find some books. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *Madness and Civilization* are hot properties in the public library system. They are not to be found anywhere. Perhaps this is because professors think Foucault is a hot property, too; he's all over everyone's syllabus.

I warn the client about this in the office. "If you don't find anything by the guy, call me," he says. He gives me his home phone number. "Only, *please* don't say you're from the essay service. Say you're . . . a classmate of mine." I promise to be discreet. Most of the clients get scared when you call them at home; most never give out their numbers. I don't blame them.

It was different, though, when I was a university student in the early 1980s. I wasn't aware of anyone who bought his or her homework anywhere, although it must have happened. It was about that time that Tailormade was putting up signs on the telephone poles outside the university's main classroom buildings. It advertised just outside the huge central library as well as outside the libraries of three or four smaller schools a few minutes' drive away. This burst of entrepreneurial confidence almost led to the service's undoing. In a spectacular cooperative sting operation among the security departments of the various schools, the office was raided. This event has become a sort of fearsome myth at Tailormade, discussed not unlike the way Syrians might occasionally mention the Israeli raid on Entebbe. Matthew and Sylvia were hauled off to court and a dozen or so clients were thrown out of their respective universities. Matthew and Sylvia, however, must have hired the right lawyer: they were allowed to reopen, provided that they stayed away from campuses and that they stamped every page of every essay TAILORMADE ESSAY SERVICE: FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY. Now the clients take the stamped essays home, retype them, and print them out on high-end laser printers much better than ours. If the client is obnoxious, complains, or is considered a whiner, each typewritten page will be stamped in the middle. If the client is steady and has good credit, each page will be stamped in the margin so that the stamp can be whited out and the pages photocopied.

By the time Tailormade reopened, I had moved back to this country after some years at home in the States. I had no money and no prospects of a legal job. I came in, handed Matthew a résumé, spent a couple of weeks on probationary trial, and then began a serious career as a hack. "What are your specialties?" Matthew had asked me. I told him I'd majored in history and political science as an undergraduate. Over time, as my financial situation grew worse, my "specialties" grew to include everything except math, accounting, economics, and the hard sciences.

OCTOBER 23. Three weeks ago I was assigned an essay on the establishment and growth of political action committees among the Christian right. I am earnest about this one; I actually overprepare. I want to document, with carefully muted horror, the world of Paul Laxalt and direct mail, the arm-twisting of members of Congress on the school prayer issue. My contempt for the client was mixed with pity: he knew not how much he was missing. Only afterward do I realize that after doing an essay I take seriously, I still expect, as in college, to get something back with a mark on it, as a reward or at least as an acknowledgment. I hear nothing, of course. I feel oddly let down. I'm certain it got the client an A. Today, the same client stops in to order



something else and helpfully points out what he thinks I could have done to improve the essay I'd written for him.

OCTOBER 25. This summer, a woman wanted me to write about how aboriginal peoples' systems of law and justice were better developed than those of conquering colonials. I took books with titles like *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1880* to the beach. After finishing the client's reading material, I still had no idea what aboriginal peoples thought about law or anything else; she had given me only books about the conquering colonials. So the paper went on, for twenty-odd pages, about the conquering colonials. Now she wants me to rewrite it. The time I will spend on this second version waters my pay down to about a dollar an hour.

NOVEMBER 8. I will not go into any of the university's libraries. I will not risk running into anyone I know, anyone who might think I'm one of those perpetual graduate students who never finished their dissertations and drift pathetically around university libraries like the undead, frightening the undergraduates. It would be as bad to be thought one of these lifelong grad students as to be suspected of being what I am. So I use the public libraries, usually the one closest to my apartment, on my street corner. It's a community library, with three wonderful librarians, three daily newspapers, and remarkably few books. If I haven't been given the books already, if the client has been dinged and I have to do research on my own, I come here. I have my favorite chair. The librarians assume I am a "mature" and "continuing" community college student, and make kind chitchat with me.

Sometimes, when I can't find any of the sources listed in the library's computer and don't have time to go to a real library, I use books barely appropriate for the essay: books for "young adults," which means twelve-year-olds, or books I have lying around my apartment—like Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, H.D.F. Kitto's *The Greeks*, Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America*, Roy Medvedev's book on Stalin or T. H. White's on John Kennedy, books by J. K. Galbraith, Lewis Mumford, Christopher Lasch, Erich Fromm. Books somewhere between the classic and the old chestnut; terrific books, yet with no relation to the topic at hand. But they're good for the odd quote and name-drop, and they can pad a bibliography. Sometimes I can't get away with this, though, and then I have no choice but to go back to an actual place of research, like the archives.

The archives are, in fact, a difficult place for me. They are full of oak tables, clicking laptops, whirring microfiche readers, and self-assured middle-aged men working with pretty young women whose hair is pinned up in nineteenth-century styles. Perhaps some of them are lovers, but certainly all of them are graduate students with their profs. I, by contrast, am a virtual student, a simulacrum.

IT'S TWO-THIRTY A.M. I'M FALLING ASLEEP. I CAN'T REMEMBER MY THESIS PARAGRAPH. I'M NOT GOING TO WORRY ABOUT IT

NOVEMBER 16. I have also been pulling at least one or two all-nighters a week for three weeks now. They're very much like the all-nighters I did as an undergraduate. I eat licorice nibs for energy and drink molehill coffee for caffeine. You make molehill coffee by pouring an entire half cup of coffee grounds, the finer the better, in a number 4 paper filter, one filter per cup. At midnight the razzy voice of Tom Waits is temporarily replaced by the BBC news hour. It would be great to be able to speak just like the BBC newscaster, Somebody hyphen-Jones. If I sounded like that I'm sure I would be able to get credit, somehow, for writing about the birth of the Carolingian Renaissance, or the displacement of the samurai in Tokugawa times, or the inadequacies of the Treaty of Versailles.

I know by experience that if I start writing at midnight I can time my output: first page by the BBC's second news summary, second page by the financial news on the half hour, third page finished by the time they read the rugby scores. Except that the first page, the one with the thesis paragraph in it, is the hardest to write, and it clocks in at well over fifteen minutes.

At two-thirty I hit a wall. The molehill coffee still hasn't kicked in yet, or else it did and I didn't notice, and now it's worn off, or else I've just built up a fatal tolerance to the stuff, like a crack addict. I begin to fall asleep in my chair, even with my headphones on. I turn up the music and blast it through the headphones. This works for the time being. I plug along. I can't really remember what I said in my thesis paragraph, but I am not going to worry about it. The client wants fifteen pages, and when I find myself on the fourteenth I'll read the thing over and brace myself, if I have to, for a bow-out. Bow-outs, like legal fine print, allow you to dart gracefully out of the large ambitious thesis statement you've started the essay with: "The top-

ic of bird evolution is an enormous one; I have been able to touch on just one or two interesting controversies within it." "Space does not permit a detailed discussion of all the internal contradictions within Sri Lanka's postcolonial history." And so on. Nine and a half pages down. Five and a half to go. I can still barely remember what I said in my thesis statement. I can barely remember what this paper is *about*. I want to put my head down for a minute on the keyboard, but God only knows what it would end up typing.

I NEED TO PAD THE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR A PAPER ON MOZART, SO I ADD A CHILD'S BOOK WITH A CARDBOARD POP-UP OF THE MUSICIAN

NOVEMBER 18. Things are picking up for Christmas vacation; everything, it seems, is due December 5 or December 15. The essay order form asks, "Subject & Level," "Topic," "No. of Pages," "Footnotes," "Bibliography," and then a couple of lines marked "Additional Information," by far the most common of which is "Simple English." As the year rolls on, we hacks will all, out of annoyance, laziness, or just boredom, start unsimplifying this simple English; by April it will approach the mega-watt vocabulary and tortured syntax of the Frankfurt School. But people hand these papers in and don't get caught, people who have difficulty speaking complete sentences in English; perhaps this is because classes and even tutorials are so big they never have to speak. But in December we're all still on pretty good behavior, simple instead of spiteful. I've just handed in an assignment in "Simple English," a paper titled "Mozart's Friendship with Joseph and Johann Michael Haydn and Its Impact on Mozart's Chamber Music." It reads, in part:

> Mozart was undeniably original. He was never derivative. That was part of his genius. So were the Haydn brothers. All of them were totally unique.

The little library on my corner didn't have much on Mozart or the Haydn brothers. As a result, one of the items in my bibliography is a child's book with a cardboard pop-up of a doughy-looking little Mozart, in a funky pigtail and knee breeches, standing proudly beside a harpsichord.

NOVEMBER 22. I'm assigned an overnight rush essay on the causes of the English Civil War. It may sound perverse, but I love rush essays. We get paid a dollar more a page (two for technical, scientific, and advanced), and if it's lousy we can always say, "Well, you wanted it in a hurry." Although I majored in history, I never took any courses on the English Civil War; I figured, wrongly, that Shakespeare's histories would take care of that. Now I find myself reading the books I took out from the little corner library, not for quotes, or to form an opinion on the roots, germination, feeding, and watering of the war, but just to find out what the hell went on. I find out enough to write five pages. It takes me all night.

NOVEMBER 23. I am handing in something entitled "Sri Lanka: A Study in Ethnic Division and Caste Co-optation," which Sylvia assigned me, over the phone, a week ago. "The girl says to tell you that *she's* Sri Lankan." Last year I wrote a senior sociology thesis on "The Italian-Canadian Family: Bedrock of Tradition or Agent of Change?" With that one I heard, "The girl says to tell you that *she's* Italian." I wanted to ask Sylvia if the client knew I wasn't, but I was afraid she'd interpret that as meaning I didn't want the work and she'd give it to someone else.

DECEMBER 2. Occasionally there is an assignment the writers fight for. This week somebody—not me—gets to take home *Fanny Hill* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and get paid for it. I guess some kids really, *really* hate to read.

DECEMBER 5. A bad assignment: unnecessarily obscure, pedantic, pointless. Certain courses seem to consist of teaching kids the use of jargon as though it were a substitute for writing or thinking well. Often there is an implied pressure to agree with the assigned book. And many are simply impossible to understand; I often take home a textbook or a sheaf of photocopies for an assignment and see, next to a phrase such as "responsible acceptance of the control dimension," long strings of tiny Chinese characters in ballpoint pen. No wonder the students find the assignments incomprehensible; they are incomprehensible to me.

DECEMBER 8. I hand in a paper on Machiavelli. "How'd it go?" asked the client, a boy in a leather bomber jacket reading John Grisham. I begin to go on about how great one of the books was, a revisionist biography called *Machiavelli in Hell*. I am hoping, with my scholarly enthusiasm, to make the client feel particularly stupid. "It's an amazing book," I tell him. "It makes a case for Machiavelli actually being kind of a liberal humanist instead of the cynical guy everybody always thinks he

was—amazing." "That's good," the kid says. "I'm glad you're enjoying yourself on my tab. Did you answer the essay question the way you were supposed to?"

DECEMBER 16. Every so often clients come in with an opinion they want us to replicate. The freshman sociology and political science essays are already starting to rain in: a deluge of "Show why immigrants are a dead weight on the economy and take jobs away from us"; "Show why most social programs will become too expensive for an aging population"; "Show why gun control can be interpreted as an infringement on civil rights"; "Show the Pacific Rim's single-handed assault on North American economies." I ignore them. I write, depending on my mood, about the INS's unequal criteria for refugee status, or the movie *Roger and Me*, or the NRA's political clout. For instance, there is today's assignment: to describe Locke's influence, as an Enlightenment figure, on our own time. I think this is baloney. I talk about how the postwar military-industrial complex proves that God really did give the world, whatever Locke thought, to the covetous and contentious instead of to the industrious and the rational. No one's ever complained about finding my opinion in a paper instead of their own. Now I realize this isn't because I've persuaded anybody of anything. It's just laziness: there are some customers who actually retype their stamped essays without bothering to read them.



DECEMBER 27. During Christmas vacation, friends of mine invite me to a party. Some people will be there whom we know from college; they are in the process of becoming successful, even making it big. It will be important to project confidence, the illusion of fulfilling my abandoned early promise. "What do I say," I ask my friends, "when somebody asks me what I do for a living?"

"Tell them you're a writer."

My friend Lisa sticks by me loyally all evening. When people ask me, "What is it you do?" Lisa answers for me quickly: "She's a writer."

"Oh, what is it you write?"

"*Essays*," I say, spitefully, drunkenly. Lisa thinks fast.

"Articles," she says. "She writes articles, on Sri Lanka, and Machiavelli, and the English Civil War."

"Isn't *that* interesting," they say, leaving us for the guacamole.

JANUARY 10, 1995. School has been back in session for a week now. The only work that is in are essays from the education students. I hate these assignments. I have trouble manipulating the self-encapsulated second language in which teaching students seem compelled to write. But it's after Christmas, and I'm broke. Education assignments all involve writing up our customers' encounters in their "practicum." Teaching students work several times a week as assistant teachers in grade school classrooms; instead of getting paid for this work, they pay tuition for it. Unfortunately, these expensive practice sessions don't seem to go well. My first such assignment was to write "reflections" on a "lesson plan" for a seventh-grade English class. The teaching student had given me some notes, and I had to translate these into the pedagogical jargon used in her textbooks. The idea seems to be that you have to say, as obscurely as possible, what you did with your seventh-grade kids and what you think about what you did:

> Preliminary Lesson Formulations: My objectives were to integrate lesson content with methodology to expand students' receptiveness and responsiveness to the material and to one another by teaching them how to disagree with one another in a constructive way. The class will draw up a T-chart covering "Disagreeing in an Agreeable Way," roughly in the manner of Bennett et al. Check for understanding. When the students discuss this, they are encouraged to listen to one another's language carefully and "correct" it if the wording is unhelpful, negative, or destructive. I shared my objectives with the class by asking them to read a fable and then divide into pairs and decide together what the moral was. Clearly, this is the "Think-Pair-Share" technique, as detailed in Bennett et al. The three strategies in use, then, are: 1) pair and sharing; 2) group discussion of the fable with mind-mapping; 3) group discussion of ways of disagreement. The teacher, modeling, divides the board in two with a line.

"Pair and share" seemed to mean "find a partner." I had no idea what "mind-mapping" or a "T-chart" was supposed to be. And come to think of it, after reading the fable, I had no idea what the moral was.

JANUARY 18. Somebody is applying to the graduate program in family therapy at some uni-

I ADAPT A PAPER, WITH MINOR CHANGES, ON THE SAME TOPIC FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES, OR FOR THE SAME CLASS THE NEXT YEAR

versity somewhere and wants us to write the application. "She's my friend," said the young woman sitting across from Matthew at the desk. "She wants to start her own private practice as a therapist, right? So she can buy a house, right? And if you're a psychiatrist you have to go all the way through med school, right? So she's given me some notes for you about her here—she only needs one credit for her B.A. in psychology, and she volunteered at a shelter one summer. She wants you to tell them all that. Maybe make up some other things."

"See," Matthew tells me after she leaves. "If you ever go to one of those therapists, that's something you should think about."

JANUARY 20. When I first started this work, friends of mine would try to comfort me by telling me it would teach me to write better. Actually, academic prostitution, just like any other kind, seems to bring with it diseases, afflictions, vices, and bad habits. There is, for instance, the art of pretending you've read a book you haven't. It's just like every speed-reading course ever offered by the Learning Annex: read the introduction, where the writer outlines what he's going to say, and the conclusion, where he repeats what he's said.

> In his book *The Technological Society*, Jacques Ellul begins by defining the technical simply as the search for efficiency. He claims, however, that technique itself is subdivided into three categories: the social, the organizational, and the economic.

This is all on the book's *first four pages*. Sometimes—often—I find myself eating up as much space as possible. There are several ways to do this. One is to reproduce lengthy, paragraph-long quotes in full; another is to ramble on about your own apparently passionate opinion on something. Or you start talking about the United States and what a handbasket it's going to hell in. This is equally useful, for different reasons, on either side of the border. You can ask rhetorical questions to obsessive excess. ("Can Ellul present the technical in such a reductionist way? Can he really define technique in such a way? And is it really valid to distinguish between the social and the organizational?" etc.) And there's always the art of name-dropping as a way to fill pages and convince the teaching assistant that your client has read *something*, even if it wasn't what was on the syllabus.

> Certainly, as writers from Eduardo Galeano to Andre Gunder Frank to Noam Chomsky to Philip Agee to Allan Frankovich to Ernesto Laclau document, the CIA has long propped up the United Fruit Company.

At least you can make the client feel stupid. It's the third week of January, my apartment is cold, and I am bitter.

FEBRUARY 8. I'm learning, as the environmentalists tell us, to reuse and recycle. It's easier when I adapt a paper, with minor changes, on the same topic for different classes, or when I use the same paper for the same class again the following year. I've never worried much about a recycled essay being recognized: the pay for teaching assistants is low enough, and the burnout rate high enough, that the odds are substantially against the same person reading and grading papers for the same course two years in a row. Some topics just seem to beg for recycling: freshmen are forever being asked to mull over the roles of determinism, hubris, and moral responsibility in the Oedipus cycle; sociology and philosophy majors, the ethics of abortion. There are essays on shantytowns in developing countries, export-oriented economies in developing countries, structural adjustment in developing countries, and one only has to make the obvious case that the three are interrelated to be able to extend the possibilities for parts of essays in any of those three categories to resurface magically within another. Other essays can be recycled with just a little tinkering to surmount minor differences in topic or in emphasis: for instance, "Italian Fascists in North America," to which "The Italian-Canadian Family" lends itself nicely; "Taboo-Breaking in Racine and Ford," which re-emerges, after minor cosmetic surgery, as "Master-Slave Relationships in Ford and Racine: What They Tell Us About Lust, Fate, and Obligation." And so on.



FEBRUARY 15. I'm sitting on the floor with a pile of old magazines, cutting out pictures of Oreo cookies and Wendy's burgers. This is Andy's essay. It's not an essay, actually, it's a food bingo chart. I have to find a large sheet of cardboard, divide it into squares, and glue on pictures of what is recognizably food. Andy is another education student: he wants to teach junior kindergarten, and his assignment is, apparently, to teach the little tots

where food comes from, or what it is, or that advertising is a vital component of each of the four basic food groups, or something. I come into Tailormade with food bingo under my arm. I've gotten some strange looks on the subway. It nets me twenty-five bucks.

MARCH 7. I was supposed to turn in an essay today, one I don't have. I fell asleep at the keyboard last night and accidentally slept through the whole night, headphones and all.

MARCH 16. There's a regular customer whose course load would be appropriate for the résumé of a U.N. secretary general. She's taking several courses on developing economies, including one referred to by other clients in the same class as "Third World Women." And one on the history of black Americans from Reconstruction to the present. I wrote her a twenty-five-page history of the early years of the civil-rights movement. She was sitting in the office when I handed it in. "Interesting course, isn't it?" she asked. She requested me again. I wrote her a paper on Costa Rica, one on dowry murders in India, one on the black leader W.E.B. Du Bois. "It's a great course, isn't it?" she asked me when she got the paper on dowry murders. "He seems like a fascinating guy," she said the day she collected W.E.B. Du Bois. "Somebody told me he wound up in *Ghana*." Today I take a shortcut across the university campus on my way to the essay service and see her with a group of other students. I make a direct beeline for her and I smile. I watch her blanch, look around, try to decide whether to pretend not to know me, decide that maybe that isn't a good idea. She gives me a stricken look and a big toothy grin.

MARCH 26. One day I'm given five pages on the Treaty of Versailles. Last year at the same time, I was assigned a paper on the same topic. A memorable paper. Two days after I turned it in, there was a camera crew outside. It turned out to be the local cable station for kids, doing an "exposé" on cheating. We taped it when it came on. It featured kids sitting in shadow, faces obscured, *60 Minutes* style.

"There she is, the little rat," Sylvia glowered at the time. The pretty young fake client handed my paper to some professor sitting behind a desk and asked, "What do you think about this? Is it better or worse than what you would normally get? Would you assume that it was a real paper or one that had been bought?"

"Well . . . it's a *credible* paper," said the professor. "I mean, one wouldn't think it was . . . *synthetic* unless one had reason to."

"What kind of grade would you give it?"

"Oh, I'd give it . . . a B minus."

"*Please*." I was really offended. Elliott comforted me. "Well, he has to say that. Now that he knows it's ours, he can't admit it's an A paper even if he wants to."

We all sat tight and waited for every professor within fifty miles to call us, threatening death. But professors don't watch cable shows for teenagers; neither do ambitious young teaching assistants. Instead, the show turned out to be a free advertising bonanza. Soon the phone rang off the hook with kids calling up and asking, "You mean, like, you can write my term paper for me if I pay you?"



APRIL 16. Today, working on a paper, I was reminded that there *are* good professors. They're the ones who either convince the kids the course content is inherently interesting and get them to work hard on the assignments or who figure out ways to make the assignments, at least, creative events to enjoy. But students with shaky language skills falter at surprises, even good ones; lazy students farm the assignments out no matter what they are. Such assignments are oddly comforting for me: I can almost pretend the two of us are talking over the clients' heads. When I'm alone in my room, in front of the computer and between the headphones, it's hard not to want to write something good for myself and maybe even for the imaginary absentee professor or appreciative T.A., something that will last. But when I'm standing in the crowded Tailormade office, next to someone elegant and young and in eight hundred bucks' worth of calfskin leather, someone who not only has never heard of John Stuart Mill and never read Othello but doesn't even know he hasn't, doesn't even mind that he hasn't, and doesn't even care that he hasn't, the urge to make something that will last somehow vanishes.

APRIL 28. The semester is almost at an end. Exams have started; the essays have all been handed in. Elliott and Russell begin their summer jobs as bike couriers. Henry, like me, is illegal; but he confides to me that he's had enough. "You can only do so much of this," he says. I know, I tell him. I know. ■

CONTINENTAL DRIFT

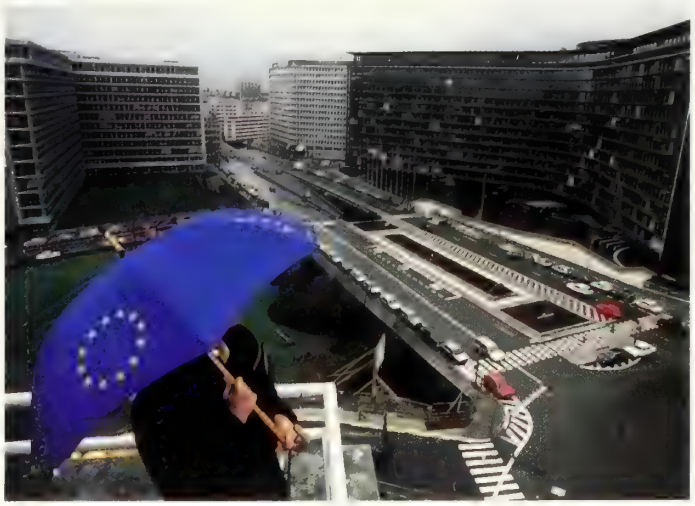
In Brussels, among the Eurocrats

By Nicholas Fraser

Belgium is a country invented by the British to annoy the French.

—Charles de Gaulle

Somewhere in Brussels not long ago, I lost my British passport. It was one of the last of the old batch: dark blue, the size of a small book, made of stiff, half-waterproof cardboard with a lion and unicorn in extravagantly embossed gold, covered with the usual reassuring stuff about Her Britannic Majesty and adorned with a disorderly configuration of cryptic letters and numerals of which 007 himself would have been proud; and I realized how sad I was to see it go. Of course, I wanted to be a European (these days we all do), but there was something not entirely appealing about a new back-pocket-size pink passport with a floppy cover. Without knowing quite why, and not for the first time, I felt let down by the idea of Europe.



I experienced the same emotion two days later when I went to hear King Juan Carlos of Spain in the medieval cloth market of Bruges. It was hot and stuffy, and there were flags representing every kind of European geographical entity. On each side of me and for many rows behind were commissioners, *chefs de cabinet*, second secretaries, rapporteurs, wives, mistresses, chauffeurs, pastry cooks, electronic recorders, and humble court scribes like myself. His Highness was tanned and elegant, even better in the flesh than in *¡Hola!* magazine, very much the perfect democrat and playboy monarch. After praising the work of a pre-Inquisition Spanish theologian who was named European Personality of the Year for his efforts to convert Islam peacefully, the King said that Europe must consist of "values" and that it must seek its own heart. "We require solidarity and cohesion in the construction of Europe," he concluded. "This is a delicate moment. In Europe 'widening' and 'deepening' are two verbs that need conjugating together."

Shutting our notebooks, we rose gratefully to our feet for the anthem: Schiller's "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Afterward, amid the enthusiastic applause, I wondered if I had missed something. Had I perhaps wandered off during the kingly peroration, reflecting on the significance of the elegant purple stripe in Juan Carlos's British double-breasted worsted, or scrutinizing Queen Sofia's High Catholic face for signs of emotion? Alas, no; the speech was as empty as the King's smile, which was why he was being applauded.

In Bruges there are swan-filled canals among the weathered-brick belfries and many ultra-Catholic renderings of happy martyrdoms, but the town, which makes its living from Eurojamborees such as the King's, is nowadays also decorated with small blue plastic flags bearing tasteful clusters of yellow stars. I walked around in the rainy dusk, then sat drinking

... is Fraser is a writer living in Lon-

gin with a friend who works in Brussels. You can be what is known as a Euroskeptic these days, which in Britain means that you hate or despise the European Union, and yet neither of us laid claim to that title. Perhaps, I thought, we were just experiencing the worrying, but not fatal, condition of Eurodespondency. My friend serves out money to the struggling countries of the old Eastern bloc, and he was concerned with the inefficiency and platitude that he encounters each day. As an outsider, I had different feelings, both more diffident and, in some respects, deeper. Like many Europeans, I had expected more from this late-century utopia. I certainly hadn't thought that I would find myself, like Candide or Winston Smith, sitting over my Flemish gin by the fireplace, giving voice to my lowered expectations.

The swans were inky-black in the canals by the time we walked back to the station. By British and American standards, Belgium, like most of Northern Europe, is astonishingly, even embarrassingly, rich. I paused in front of a vast pile of gold-wrapped chocolates lit by spotlight and surmounted by a fake-gothic arch dotted with dinky blue and yellow insignia, Euroteddies, and blue-rinsed Smurfs; and I contemplated tipsily the phenomenon of boredom. Why, I asked my companion, was the New Europe so horrendously boring? What had gone wrong with our own heartland of civilization that it had come, finally, to chocolate poisoning, recycled Schiller, and little blue flags?

Living as he does in Brussels, with the attendant climate of optimism, my colleague shrugged. "It is boring," he said, "but only if you're inside. From the outside it looks better. We're just the last bourgeois; we just have the old guilts about our own success. But you have to remember, too, that all utopias are boring. No one ever said that Europe was going to be exciting."

Many years in gestation, this now aging New Europe has altered its identity slowly, growing from six countries to nine, then twelve, and to fifteen this year. At its birth, amid postwar rubble, the new utopia was called the European Coal and Steel Community. Following the 1957 Treaty of Rome, it acquired the more grandiose name European Community. Two years ago, as a result of the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, it became, finally, the European Union. The name changes reflect not so much altered functions as increased pretensions. Beneath the concrete skin, "Europe" is pretty much the same creature it always was. Self-evidently dystopian the Union may be, but it still shines each day with clerkish busyness, recomposing itself as an ideal bureaucratic creation, as if the European elite had at some point been shipped en masse to the John F. Kennedy School of Government, returning federalized, blessed with New World optimism.

Coming to Brussels, I invariably sensed a distillation of bad things previously encountered in other, half-forgotten lives. To be sure, I had seen grander and bigger bureaucracies, such as the American Imperial one, or bigger and shoddier ones in *ancien régime* socialism, and yet something here—perhaps the utter absence of style—was quite distinctive. I emerged with the whiff of rubber in my nostrils from the Metro stop on Place Schumann and walked around the starfish-shaped Berlaymont building, constructed on stilts, scene of so many forgotten bureaucratic triumphs and setbacks, now being gutted of asbestos. I paused in the cold on top of a low hill, on a roundabout. The cityscape of Brussels is dense and confused, pleasantly ugly in a familiar Northern European way, but here it had been shuffled into order. I walked past rain-slicked caramel marble, dumped inelegantly on several levels of a slope, and the building in which the Council of Ministers and the various permanent committees representing the member states have their seats.

At the bottom of the hill, crossing roads and parking lots, I reached a set of buildings like expensive shopping malls and a vast open site littered with yellow cranes. Here stood the as yet unfinished Parliament, built to house the 518 MEPs (and their staffs) when they're not sitting in plenary session in a similar slab some 250 miles southeast in Strasbourg on the Franco-German border, where the Parliament moves periodically, feeding off the countryside in the style of a medieval king. Again and again, walking between arcades of reflecting glass that wouldn't have been out of place in Ceauşescu's Bucharest, I concluded that among the worst-looking cities in Europe are those left unscarred by World War II. First you make a hash of modernity, and then, at great cost, you try to make amends, making things worse. Translated into Latin, that thought could be the motto of the New Europe.

Naively, perhaps because they are not familiar with the traditions of elite French bureaucratese in which all Eurodirectives are formulated, Anglo-Saxons take seriously the clatter of pronouncements that regularly issues forth from Brussels. They fail to see the enormous gap between the high-sounding pronouncements and the mundane accomplishments forced through by the most traditional of political methods. There is at present no "kind of a United States of Europe"—the phrase is Churchill's, from 1946—nor, most probably, will there ever be one. Much of the power of the Union is still vested in nation-states, and they retain a veto over all important matters, conducting their own foreign policy, except when they elect to do otherwise. Although currently in various stages of deep disrepair, the nation-states won't suddenly disappear, as the federalists seem to imagine.

Outsiders also traditionally underestimate the enormous discretionary powers vested in the Brussels bureaucracy and the ability of the bureaucracy to secure consent by depicting the new European institutions as somehow above or beyond politics. When confronted with a difficult bureaucratic conundrum, Brussels invariably responds by making more rules. If these can be devised in camera, without excessive press scrutiny, so much the better; but if they require governmental approval, so be it. In any important matter, the European Commission will therefore overturn

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IN BOOKSTORES FROM VIKING

its own rules in favor of a recalcitrant member state. Still, to preserve appearances, all EU compromises are presented as high declarations of principle; no one really comes clean about why things are done.

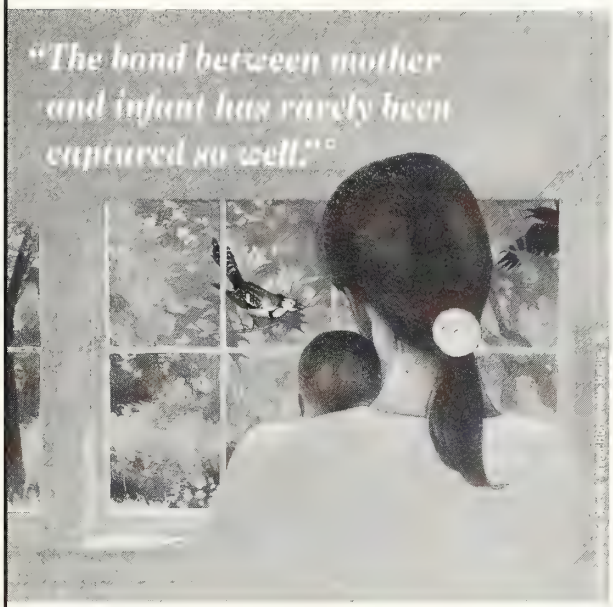
Consider, for instance, the collapse of the European movie industry. For many years, Directorate General 10 of the Commission, which is in charge of the portentously named "audiovisual policy," has struggled with the question of why Europeans watch American movies. From the outside, it may look as if the triumph of Hollywood is a fact of global life, like vanishing rain forests or the fate of salamanders. But, no, this is too simple. Various think tanks have been summoned and staffed expensively with audiovisual worthies. They have come up with complicated proposals for rejuvenating European movies by spending billions of European Currency Units (ECUs) to create new European products and trans-frontier, multilingual information superhighways to carry them. However, most of these proposals threaten not just the GATT agreements but also the freedom of individual governments to support their own film industries in the way they wish, without EU interference. Consequently, nothing much has been done, though a new set of ten-year quotas is now being proposed. Europeans continue to desert art houses for the works of Steven Spielberg, to abandon cute Catalonian glove puppets for *The Simpsons*.

Strangely, the characterlessness of the Commission has ensured that it remains immune to criticism at a time when, in almost every European country, politicians have fallen into disrepute. Officials are supposed to cast off their political loyalties when they come to Brussels, but they do not. Well paid, never especially corrupt—the odd suicide takes place, but it is rare—they nonetheless generate corruption on a grand scale, particularly in relation to agricultural policy or to the various "coherence schemes," by means of which money is transferred from richer states like Germany, France, or Britain to poorer ones in return for favors performed. One scandal

that came to light last year concerned the passing off of $160 million of foreign imported beef as Irish, so that it could be exported to Iraq while becoming eligible for the various subsidies granted to farmers as compensation for overproduction. Nonexistent and redundant crops or animals now come under the rubric of European protectionism; even the Queen of England, still one of the richest women in Europe, reportedly receives $400,000 each year for planting or not planting various items of greenery. And yet it never occurs to anyone to blame the Union itself for such profligacy. Brussels is a creation of the French bureaucratic consciousness, and elite French minds delight in standardized abstraction. Other than ennui, the most characteristic Bruxellois product is uniformity. Whether you are there to discuss permissible banana curvatures or the number of hours animals may be carried in a closed truck before they are slaughtered, the European day is the same. You arrive early, after a flight, and enter an airless room with translation boxes. Many people are there—too many for real business—and the morning is spent in procedural wrangling. By midday, the British and French are at war—*bien entendu*—but stomachs are rumbling. At lunch a delicacy is consumed—the white truffle, let's say. But the afternoon mood is no better, and the assembly begins to fragment: North against South, Protestant against Catholic, and, by the end, everyone else against the Danes and the British. At six o'clock, however, when dusk is turning the windows gray-violet, the bureaucrats move in to negotiate a resolution. No one is happy with the outcome, but everyone is free to cast blame and take comfort in the memory of the white truffle.

In the Parliament lobby, sitting among a group of multilingual computer-paper salesmen from Ghent, I nervously fingered the 1991 Maastricht Treaty. It's a tough read, as if a railway timetable had been painstakingly drafted by a fuddled *nouveau romancier* and then, at the last

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minute, redrafted by someone who wasn't sure that the trains had wheels, or could move at all. The legislators apparently meant to say in the preamble that a federal state was on its unstoppable way; but the observation was vetoed by the British, and we now have yet another pious Schillerism about "ever-growing unity." Struggle through the hundred-odd leaden clauses of Chapter 4, innocuously entitled "Transitional Provisions," turn to the "Protocols," and you discover that the game finally proved too difficult for its participants. What the treaty says is that you may join the Union by agreeing, at a specified date, to have the same currency; but if you don't want to meet the deadline, or if you can't, that's all right, too. Everyone can, in the end, do what he wants. This is the new Brussels wisdom.

I walked through marbled halls, beneath still more flags and statues of well-known Luxembourgeois Christian Democrats. In a passage adjoining the immense canteen, stocked with more than half-decent subsidized Bordeaux, I encountered a row of colored metal artworks depicting the national characteristics of member states. The Germans, I noted, deserved praise for their "receptivity to ideas," the British for their "love of tradition." Belgium, mysteriously, got a pat on the back for being "in the forefront of information."

Deprived of real influence, lacking even the opportunity to initiate legislation, Parliament resembles an outsized game of Clue in which there are lots of libraries but no crimes, and in which the guests are handsomely cosseted by squads of pleasant-faced, sharp-elbowed young Jeeveses known as *stagiaires*. Aside from the usual Medusa raft of flat-earthers, careerists, and absenteeists, the present roster includes Nana Mouskouri, the 1960s Greek chanteuse; Prince Otto of Hapsburg; Dany ("le rouge") Cohn-Bendit, begetter, as a student, of the 1968 Paris riots; the Reverend Ian Paisley, hater of the Pope and brass-lunged hellfire preacher; Jack Lang, the dapper, Thierry Mugler–attired postmodern aesthete who, as French minister of culture, put I. M. Pei's pyramid in front of the Louvre; and, perhaps most remarkably, Sir James Goldsmith, the exotic Anglo-French billionaire, whose political interests lately have shifted from purely ecological concerns to an implacable opposition to the European Union based on the restoration of the old nation-state.

In the old days it was the dog-eared British Tories who gave a grudging, negative style, born of post-imperial disgruntlement, to parliamentary opposition. No such inhibitions affect Sir James, who as a newcomer to Euroland has cheekily taken to parking his limousine in the wrong spaces and publishing the aggrieved letters he receives from bemused officials. Bumptiously beady-eyed, restless between meaningless functions, Sir James has turned his sense of discomfiture into a personal art form.

Disruption is what Sir James promises that his own twenty-strong parliamentary group will achieve. "The Brussels Parliament is an extraordinary place," he told me. "It's infinitely worse than you could imagine. You don't debate here, you exist to serve the interests of an executive. When you do speak, you're allowed only three minutes, and it turns out that the vote has been rigged anyhow. The atmosphere is that of the Third Estate just before the French Revolution got going, except that technocrats have taken the place of the monarchy."

I repeated what my friend had said in Bruges. Why, if things were so awful here, did people want to join? Perhaps Europeans were sick of their old nation-states, which seemed increasingly ill-attuned to reality. Mrs. Thatcher had gambled her career on defending the nation-state, and she, after all, had failed.

"There is no alternative to nation-states in Europe," he said, almost testily. "You can't just abolish them when there's nothing to put in their place. Do you think French people don't want to be French? Do you really imagine that Germany will wither away, just like that?"

I pondered Sir James's views while driving into the Belgian countryside. Ethnic nationalism is in vogue

throughout Europe, and the Belgians can claim to be the fashion leaders in this field. Like the good Catholics they are, living in a dark northern land, Belgians set great store by museums and monuments. At Dixmuide, standing near the sea in a flat landscape as horribly desolate as the Thames marshes of eastern England in which Pip encountered the convict Magwitch, is a large black plinth covered with names and the inscription AVV VVK: *Alles voor Vlaanderen, Vlaanderen voor Kristus* ("All for Flanders, Flanders for Christ"). Here, each August, some fifty thousand Flemish Belgians assemble to commemorate the 1914 battle of the Yser, when King Albert I ordered the bungs pulled out of the dikes, halting the German advance with great loss of life. Traditionally, the banners displayed each August have been Catholic and pacifist, held up by busty Virgin-worshiping teenagers in peasant costumes; but in recent years a rancorous tone has crept into the speeches.

I confess that I knew little about Flemish nationalism, except that I had seen *Daens*, an intriguing biopic about a Catholic priest who leaves the church in 1900 and becomes head of the first Flemish-speaking political party in Belgium. Poignantly old-fashioned in style, recalling the "clog epics" favored by British directors in the 1960s, the film—financed in part by the EU—depicts Daens as an exemplary if stubborn man who stands for the usual package of workers' rights of that time but for whom linguistic subordination is the *via crucis*. Daens speaks French haltingly, and he cannot stand on equal footing with the French-speaking bosses. It is a matter of outrage for him that the girls working in Flemish textile factories cannot communicate with the factory inspectors who ask them about their work conditions. When he goes to Brussels, the hoity-toity Frenchified style of the Belgian court renders him, literally, speechless, so that he can only rage like a dog.

Nowadays, the Flemish part of Belgium is richer than French-speaking Wallonia, and the latter-day Daenses have what they want: a snug homeland in which Flemish is spoken, a bilingual Brussels in which even parking tickets are in two languages, Flemish education, Flemish television, Flemish road signs. But these measures have given Belgium the largest level of public indebtedness in Europe without significantly quieting Flemish resentment; indeed it would seem as if they have merely encouraged separatists to ask for more.

In a dog-fouled back street of the port of Antwerp, behind the municipal bus station, next door to some elderly prostitutes catering by the hour to visiting seamen, are to be found the offices of Vlaams Blok, the Flemish Nationalist Party. Indiscreetly racist, calling for the repatriation of all foreign workers—though, significantly, not the rich Jewish diamond-cutting and -dealing community—the party has on various occasions displayed an attachment to the memory of the Third Reich, on the dubious but no doubt historically correct grounds that Adolf Hitler abetted the cause of the Flemish language. In the last local elections the Vlaams Blok was the largest single party, polling up to 46 percent in some wards.

In the committee rooms, yellow-black flags with lions rampant were inscribed, pithily, *Belgie Baarst!* ("Die Belgium!"), and an odor of knockwurst and stale beer pervaded. I wished to talk about Belgian history. Why get rid of Belgium? Why bother to destroy something when you already have most of what you want? But Filip Dewinter, who is secretary of the local party, brushed aside my interest. "This is old stuff, you know," he said. "Belgium is already finished. By now Belgium is not an interesting subject; it could vanish tomorrow, by means of legislation, and everyone who now lives in the country would still be here. You know who the only real Belgians are? The royal family, and they're Austrians, anyhow; they were put here by the great powers. As a geopolitical entity, Belgium belongs in the European Museum. We say, Let it die."

Fortyish, groomed in a 1950s style, dressed like a Tintin character

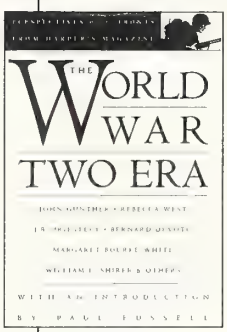
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in a natty blue suit, fingering his small steel-rimmed glasses and speaking more than passable Berlitz English, Dewinter had learned not to fall into the easy traps set by visitors. He talked about Europe and the Flemish tradition, about how much easier it is to be a small nation at a time when frontiers have been rendered meaningless. When I suggested that this was all very well but that sending foreign workers home wasn't compatible with the supranational, liberal character of the Europe in which he claims membership, he shrugged affably and smiled. "The Flemish people believe in the integrity of their own culture, and they want to preserve its character," he said. "They also are Europeans. There is no contradiction."

From rainy Antwerp I drove south, crossing and recrossing the linguistic divide as I went from province to province. Everywhere there were signs, but the inscriptions were in one language, and I often lost my way. I intuited that Ghent was presumably the same as Gand, but what was Kootrijk? Courtrai, perhaps? And was Mons really the same place as Bergen? Leave us alone, is what these signs untactfully and decisively said; don't come near us. I know that smallness is sentimentally associated in the late twentieth century with the existence of a sense of community or a spirit of democracy, but in Belgium the lack of real distance means that you can live side by side with your fellows while continuing either to hate their guts or wish, more or less heartily, to have nothing whatsoever to do with them.

Around the ugly town of Ieper—Ypres, as it was known when hundreds of thousands were killed here during the Great War—I drove from cemetery to cemetery, and the soft countryside disappeared entirely into low, insignificant hills or dead flatness. The German and French stones are simple affairs—names, dates, the pretext or occasion of death—but the British ones, laid out around elaborate architectural creations, garden huts, or memorial arches, evoke a network of cultural loyalties, to king, or to empire, or to old geographical loyalties, counties and portions of extinct colonies, all the more poignant because they lost their meaning many years ago. Pausing at the horribly misnamed Sanctuary Wood, with its rusting relics assembled to form the inevitable museum of death, I noticed that I was being followed at a snail's pace by a cortege of black-clad motorcyclists. When they stopped and dismounted, taking off their helmets and goggles, they introduced themselves not as Hell's Angels but as God-fearing, bourgeois members of the Motorcycle Club of Brabant.

We went slowly in convoy through the rain. Somewhere in these dull fields Adolf Hitler was gassed in 1918, blinded for three weeks. Near here, too, a British platoon came across a solitary infantryman lodged up to his knees in mud. They couldn't pull him out, and they went away for help; two days later, when they found him again, he was up to his neck in mud and had gone mad.

Ypres is where the old European ideas of grandeur and nationality foundered, and where the idea of any moral worth inherent in a nation-state expired. "I came to hate this place," a British soldier, J. W. Naylor, wrote. "I was always dreaming of these awful names: Zonnebeke, Zillebeke, Hill 60, which filled us with terror before we got there, so horrible were their associations. Going to Passchendaele once more was the last straw . . . I would think: 'What is the point of going on? What do I care who wins this bloody war?'"

Bedraggled and shining in their black leather, the motorcyclists carefully wiped their mustaches with handkerchiefs and prepared to drive home. "It won't happen again in Belgium," one of them said, shaking my hand. "We can be sure it won't happen again."

I'm certain that he's right. Belgium is Europe now, and we are all of us well on the way to being Belgified. Later, as I waited for the plane to London, I wondered, not wholly as an idle exercise, what would be the very worst thing the European Union could do to Europe. Whatever it was, there would be no early-

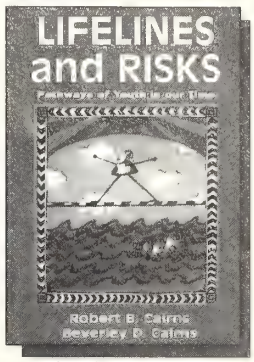
morning coercion, no gulag to which recalcitrants would be sent. Instead, we Europeans would probably wake up in a very large rainproof shopping mall full of separate booths designated Germany, France, Britain, Finland, Flanders, Denmark, or wherever, each of them selling what remained of national habits or institutions, good or bad. We'd have our special currency, of course, and our magnetized swipe passes; compared with the hordes outside, we'd think ourselves fortunate. At regular intervals the "Ode to Joy" would be piped in. Some days, peering out at the chaos on Earth, we might ask ourselves whether we were really happy, and then decide that yes, we were. Whatever we had lost was forgotten by now, like a child's bad dream, and wasn't really worth keeping in the first place. ■

June Index Sources

1 White House Press Office; **2** U. S. Senate Library; **3,4** The Gallup Organization (Princeton, N.J.); **5** *Harper's* research; **6** Federal Election Commission (Washington); **7** CCS International (N.Y.C.); **8** Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington); **9** CNN-*USA Today*-Gallup Poll (Princeton, N.J.); **10** Peter D. Hart Research Associates (Washington); **11** California Legislative Analysts' Office (Sacramento); **12** Death Penalty Information Center (Washington); **13** National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, Md.)/Cooperative Linkage Center (Iowa City); **14** CNBC-Gallup Poll (Princeton, N.J.); **15** Office of Undergraduate Admissions at Harvard and Radcliffe (Cambridge, Mass.); **16,17** Andrew Hacker, Queens College (N.Y.C.); **18** Murray Feshback, Georgetown University (Washington); **19** *Cosmopolitan* (Moscow); **20** Committee to Protect Journalists (N.Y.C.); **21** Doctors Without Borders (N.Y.C.); **22** United Nations (N.Y.C.); **23** William H. Honan, the *New York Times* (N.Y.C.); **24,25** Toledo Police Department; **26,27** Ruben Ramirez, New York City Department of Transportation; **28** Bob Klaus, WJMP Akron; **29** U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (Arlington, Va.); **30** Mike Easterbrook, University of Toronto; **31** National Park Service (Washington); **32** Office of Presidential Libraries (Washington)/Chamber of Commerce (Hope, Ark.); **33** Children Now (Oakland, Calif.); **34** High-Scope Educational Research Foundation (Ypsilanti, Mich.); **35** U.S. Census Bureau (Suitland, Md.); **36** *Harper's* research; **37** Truckstop Ministries (Atlanta); **38** Don Vail, *Austin American-Statesman* (Austin, Tex.); **39** Kaiserschnitt (Berlin, Germany).

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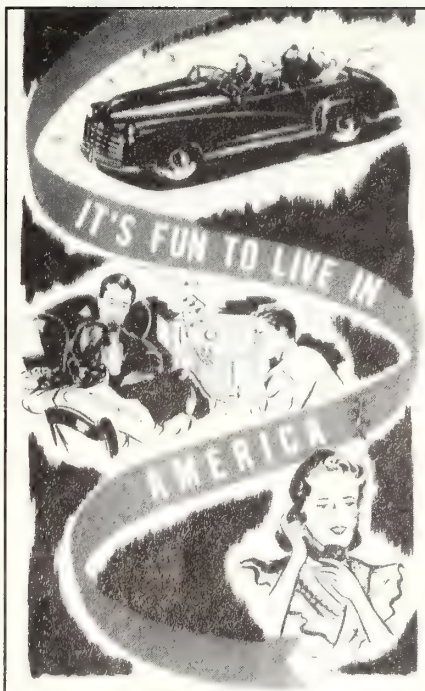
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FEAR OF HEIGHTS

By Eric Gamalinda

In the summer of 1979, Skylab, the first and only manned American space laboratory, malfunctioned and crashed to earth. NASA scientists calculated that most of its pieces would fall in the Asian Pacific region. Filipino mystics predicted that the biggest chunks would hit Manila. The Philippine government mobilized disaster teams, and the education secretary suspended all classes, announcing, "We cannot tell what the heavens will do. We must trust in God."



A devoted fortune-teller follows a set of daily rituals and abides by certain rules, not only to fortify himself but to give strength to people who seek his guidance. Like a samurai, he greets each day with humility and gratitude, says a quiet prayer for its generosity of light, and remembers that one day he, like the sun, will die. Like a Buddha, he keeps his necessities to a minimum: clean clothes and a simple breakfast, enough to last him through the strenuous ordeal of a reading. Like the Jain, he does no harm, gets out of the way, and maintains a reverence for all living things: he does not disturb the universe. And like Christ, he must always feel love for all people, more so for those who cannot love him in return.

It's not the easiest thing to do, and so understandably there are a lot of fortune-tellers who merely go through the motions, especially in Manila, where practically everybody professes to be psychic to some degree. But Manila has always been a hard place in which to save the soul.

LESSON ONE: You Can't Tell Everybody Everything. Reading someone's fortune is like playing poker: you've got something on somebody but you keep the crucial parts to yourself. Nobody wants bad news. People need to be told how great they are, how wonderful life's going to be despite current setbacks. And you must add a good deal of encouragement as well: be brave, be strong, for the future is in your hands. There is no dishonesty here: we all know that everything is in flux, and change is the only constant in the universe. The clients walk away happy, their lives renewed by hope, and you stuff the cards back in the box with a stranger's darkness hidden in you like mortal sin. At the end of the day, the

Eric Gamalinda is a poet and novelist from

Illustration by Jeremy Wolff

ortune-teller sits in meditation and expels all the bad karma he has absorbed from his readings, and after his ritual of exorcism he listens to a Beethoven symphony, or any other favorite music, and sleeps peacefully, hearing only his own concerns.

LESSON TWO: You Learn from Every Encounter. You have to, or there's no point in doing it at all. This morning Mrs. Cruz came in for the third time this week with the same set of questions as always and the same troubled look on her face. She was very cheery at first, asking me questions so vague that the cards could give me no answers. I tried to amuse her by reading her palm and then offering to make tea, and then she laid it on me: the same question she had asked two mornings before.

Mrs. Cruz, I said, we already know what the answer is.

I wasn't concentrating that time, she protested. I haven't been sleeping well.

I laid the cards on the table, many of them the same ones we had read during her previous sessions. This didn't surprise me at all. In most readings a person who asks the same questions twice gets variations of the same answer, with a bit of a reprimand for good measure. My mind often goes blank with the really persistent clients, and the cards that turn up make no sense. I was hoping I wouldn't go blank on Mrs. Cruz. She needed a great deal of help.

I lifted the King of Pentacles. There he is again, Mrs. Cruz, I said. Your husband has made up his mind. You can get the annulment if you like. He'll give you the house and some money to live on. You'll have plenty to start anew. You have to be strong, because you've got a lot of things going for you.

And the girl? she asked.

I tapped a finger on the Lovers.

It could be me, she said.

No, Mrs. Cruz, I told her. It's not you.

I'll go dancing, she said. Ballet. I want to study ballet. Do you think I should study ballet?

I told her she might find the experience interesting. Mrs. Cruz was forty-nine years old.

Aerobics, she said.

Bravo, Mrs. Cruz. That's how you do it. And, as usual, she heaved a sigh, pressed a few bills in my hand, and I protested strongly and gave them back. She seemed satisfied with the reading, for the moment at least, and we drank some tea. When she left, she dropped the bills, surreptitiously, reverently, on the table beside my censer.

Always they ask about love. Love and its other: solitude. That giddy emptiness, the vertigo: I know it too well. The acrobat sets his foot on the tightrope but looks straight on, feeling only the roughness scrape his slippered feet. He doesn't know if there is anybody down below watching him—everything is enveloped in darkness, and all he sees is the shaft of pale light beamed at him. But it doesn't matter. He moves on, slipping one foot before the other, each time catching the outline of the rope—the feel of it—on the arch of his foot. Halfway across he imagines he is walking in space, an angel. He is exhilarated, then terrified. He falters, tilts to one side, flaps his arms, then traces an arc as he falls to the net below. Only there is no net. And his descent is interminable: there is no ground to break his fall.

Next come the minor concerns: work and money, and then health. But always it is love that afflicts these dislocated souls. The intensity of it drives them to seek someone in whom they can confide their torment. They don't even want to know what will become of their love, because in their minds all love leads to darkness, and the inevitability of it stokes the embers and transforms the beloved into an obsession. No, they want nothing more than the verbalization of their tenuous state. They watch their torment unfold before them as I lay out the cards, and their eyes, kept low and fixed on my hand as I turn up each card from the pack, seem to say, Yes, that is so. That is the source of my malady.

LESSON THREE: Desire Is the Cause of Suffering. Conversely, the Groundwork of All Faith Is Human Woe. But I don't tell them that. The diagnosis itself is what they seek, as though by mere confirmation they draw one more soul into the conspiracy, and the shared secret is what fortifies them—for another minute, another day.

This afternoon, right on schedule, Marta dropped by. She was carrying a paper bag full of *chico* and took out three pieces of the small, brown fruit for me. I've been having this craving, she said. You were right, she added, it's been there a month. I went to a doctor after my reading and he said the same thing. She sat down heavily on the chair across my table.

Is it a boy or a girl? she asked me.

A boy, I told her. No, a girl. No, wait—a boy.

Maybe they're twins, she said.

Unico hijo, I told her. Only child.

I laid out the cards and didn't ask her for questions. There are some people who wear their concerns on their faces, a helpless, resigned look, and Marta's was transparent. I told her to watch her health, stop smoking, and talk to her boss about going on leave.

A *vacation*? she asked.

Hospital, I said. It'll be a premature birth.

My God, she said.

Don't worry, I reassured her. You'll both be fine.

I fished out the Knight of Cups from the pack. He's offering me something, Marta said, pointing at the proffered cup. She had become conversant in the symbols of the deck, thanks to frequent consultations.

You'll be all right, I told her.

He's running away, isn't he?

I'm sorry, I said. But you'll be all right. Look, new people are coming into your life. This one with a gift (I don't know what). And this one with a vow to protect you.

But why the card of Death? she asked me.

A time of renewal, I told her. Don't let it frighten you. It's a very auspicious card.

She took out one *chico* from the

and began peeling the fruit. Then I noticed that tears were streaming down her cheeks. I got up and brought her a box of Kleenex. You have a marvelous gift, Marta, I told her. The gift of life within you. What a positively marvelous gift.

I feel terrible, she said. Like something's churning inside me. Like something's eating my insides.

That's because you're feeding two people now, I told her. Didn't your doctor tell you that?

I lied, she said. I didn't go to a doctor.

You should, I said. I'm not an obstetrician. I can't tell you what to do.

Yes, you can, she said. Maybe you can deliver it right here.

No, Marta.

Why not?

I can't stand the sight of blood.

She let out a laugh. Or rather a strange gasp that sounded like a cough, which she expelled into a Kleenex. She got up and hugged me with her free arm. I hugged her back and kissed her on the cheek. Some people need only the slightest token of affection to bolster them. I'll be back, she said.

As often as you like, I told her.

She slipped a fifty-peso bill in my shirt pocket. I took it out and handed it back to her. No, Marta, you go to a doctor. Right now. *Then* I'll take your money.

What if I run out? she said.

Then I'll take the baby, I said.

She laughed again, the same stifled cough.

LESSON FOUR: Keep Your Head Above Water. It's all very nice to think you've got a direct line to the celestial sphere, as long as you don't let it go to your head. This is not the millennium for saviors, and anybody who thinks it is winds up lacing Kool-Aid in Guyana. And the times are even more demanding now, because everybody, everywhere, has to believe in something, just as the shipwrecked cling to debris: God, love, ideology, money, all the hollow idols floating in a sea of hope.

And so fortune-tellers who take themselves seriously have to train themselves not to take themselves seriously. Case in point: all those bejeweled matrons who have begun taking crash courses in mind power and who are now lining up to give celestial advice to the First Lady. I say, with all due respect, that they should all be banished to the infernal kitchen. Why? Because they believe that for three thousand pesos they can stop the world. A good mystic must always show respect for physical law.

LESSON FIVE: You've Got to Know Your Limits. Sometime in the early Seventies, if I recall, mysticism stopped being an esoteric eccentricity and became a household word, a parlor game, a national dementia. Cabalistic covens in bookshops, séances in Grace Park, communities waiting for extraterrestrials in Banahaw and Laguna, saffron-robed space cadets chanting off-key ragas, Bible preachers loosely interpreting the Apocalypse in Luneta, faith healers in Sampaloc, astrologers in the government press. No wonder Imelda Marcos had the idea that the country was once the capital of Mu, that mythical continent said to have predated Atlantis. Mu: a nonsense expression uttered by Zen Buddhists to denote the impossibility of locating Nirvana. Madame Marcos thought there was a hole in the sky through which divine messages were transmitted to the minds of her starving constituents. Some Zen monk should have whacked her on the head. But we knew our limits, and we said nothing in those days. The world was on its feet, heaven was on our side; we saw visions strange and foreboding, but we kept them to ourselves, because heaven blesses the meek.

I may sound as if I constantly contradict myself. Very often I do. A fortune-teller cannot always profess to have mastered the art of locating the center, or of logic. I suppose only the great prophets were able to do that, and the rest of us have to toddle along in the search, each nurturing his own torment.

The final visitor of the day was Mr. Torres, who lived just upstairs. He hobbled in painfully, supporting himself on a cane. I helped him to a chair, where he caught his breath for a few minutes. I brought him a glass of water. He took a sip, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and said, It's working well. I think I'm getting better every day. He looked at the glass in his hand and said, Or maybe it's the water. Do you use holy water?

It's not the water, Mr. Torres, I told him. If you say you're getting better, then you most certainly are.

I laid out the cards before him. The Sun, the Moon. He didn't wait for me to interpret them. Sometimes Mr. Torres just came down for a chat. They're raising the rent soon. Did you hear about that? he asked me.

No, I said. How much are they raising it?

Double, he said.

That's ridiculous, I said. Isn't there a price ceiling or something?

Mr. Torres laughed. Nobody follows that, boy, he said.

I can't afford double the rent, I said.

Then there'll be two of us out in the streets, he said. Maybe you can put up a stall in Quiapo.

Too much competition, I told him.

Well, we don't have to worry about that, he said. The city's going to be bombed very soon.

What do you mean, bombed?

Haven't you heard? he said. Oh, I forgot. You don't own a radio. You should get yourself a radio, boy.

What's the news?

A spaceship is going to fall on Manila, he said gravely.

Oh, I've heard about that. Everybody at the corner store has been talking about it all week. It's a space station, Mr. Torres. It's called Skylab, and it's returning to earth.

Can you tell where it's going to fall? he asked me.

The experts can tell you that, I told him, shuffling the cards. It doesn't say here, I said. But it says: Take care of yourself, watch your diet.

Why should I watch my diet when we're all going to be crushed to death? Those experts you talk about say they have no *idea* where

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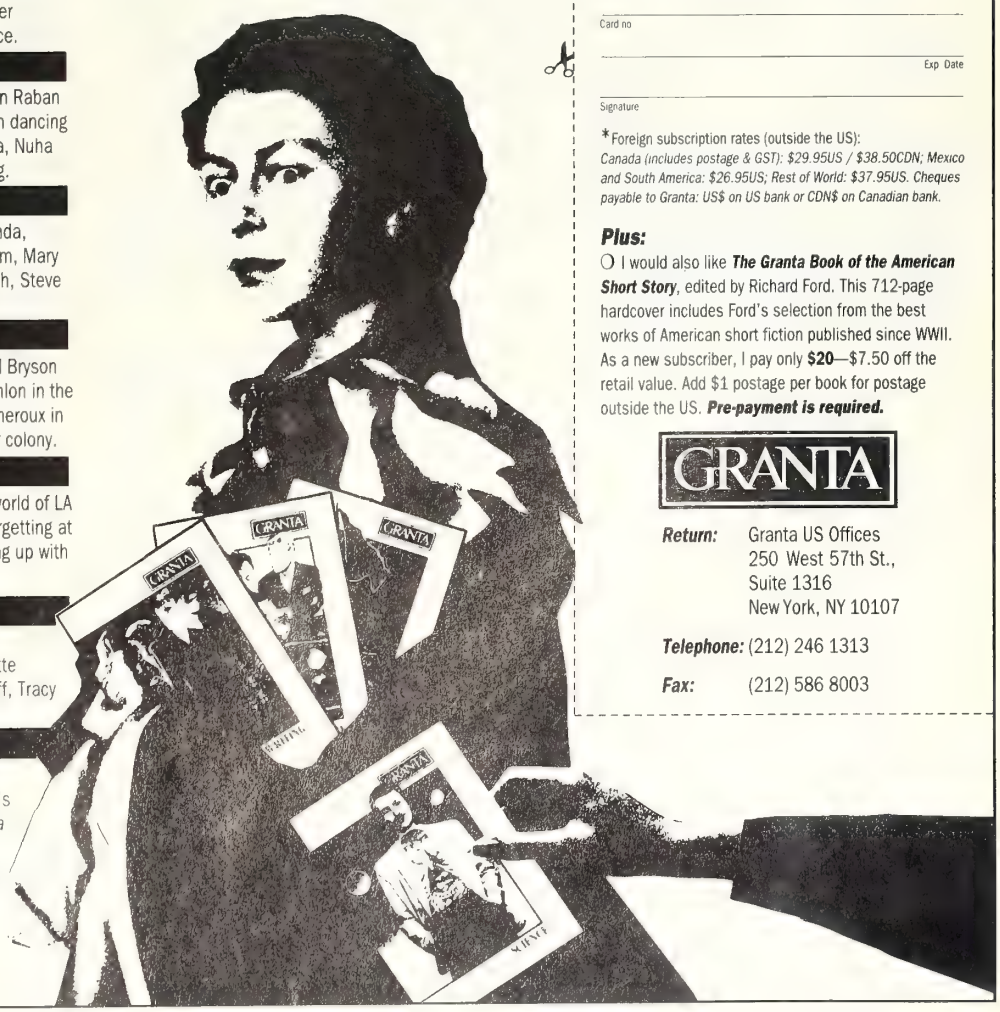
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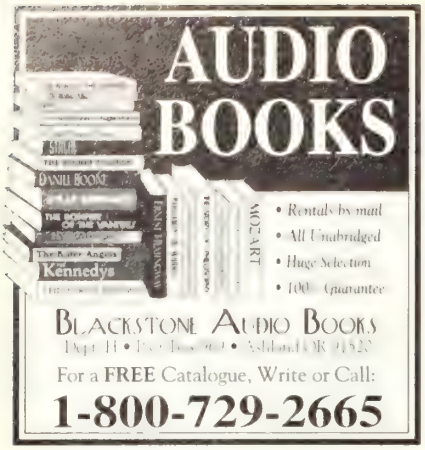
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the damn thing's going to fall. He heaved a prodigious sigh, leaned back, and said, All right, I'm ready now.

I walked behind him and placed both hands a few inches above the top of his head.

I can feel it coming in, he said. Like a fire entering my spine. He closed his eyes.

You're doing all right, I told him. Have you had a checkup recently?

He opened his eyes and waved a hand dismissively. Bah, he said. Doctors don't do me any good.

I gave him a vial of lavender oil. Rub this on your forehead before going to bed, I told him. It'll make you rest better.

He placed the vial in his pocket and said, What if we sleep through the crash?

The space station? I asked him. Well, if it's falling anywhere near here, I'll come and wake you up.

He struggled to get up and leaned on his cane. Won't do any good to run, he said, if the whole city's going to get hit anyway.

We'll find some place, I reassured him.

He hobbled out and I sat down to look at the cards again, and for some moments all I could hear was his cane tapping faintly among the shadows.

LESSON SIX: You Can't Live Apart from the World. People think of fortune-tellers as sage, stoic Brahmins who are impervious to human emotions or physical suffering. To be able to feel deep longing—for a plate of *sisig* or the love of a human being—to watch the sunset with awe and terror, to be troubled by lust when one is alone in the dead of night, to weep silently in a closed, dark room, to long for adventure in a foreign land, to want a good pair of pure cotton socks or a sweater of bright designs, to fail to decode the nuances of sexual seduction: these are privy to mortals only, not to people who supposedly are in tune with things divine. Fortune-telling, therefore, is a life of extreme solitude. The danger here is self-pity. You try to avoid it, but it seeps through in sly moments, which is why people are correct in thinkin that a fortune-teller conducts reading based partly on his ow predicament and state of mind.

Mrs. Cruz comes in with the san set of questions, the same deep gas in her heart that needs to be sew up with the thread of love.

Will he ever come back to h senses, come back to the love we'v nurtured twenty years?

No and again no, Mrs. Cru Love is the strongest and most ten uous of emotions, it is as inexplica ble as science, it happens out of certain need in which whirl th demons of desire and adoration, is illusory, it turns against itse like an animal bursting out of i cage.

Marta comes with a bag of *chic* and a question she never asks: Wh will watch over me in my hour need?

A lot of people, Marta, if onl you'd look around, but your empt ness is a black hole that swallows a light around it and collapses to world still unexplored.

And Mr. Torres asks, Will I di and will God take me?

Of course He will, Mr. Torres. Bu whether God is up there on a thron being feted by a choir of angels down in the bowels of the earth feed ing on the souls of the dead, I don know. I only know that some thing accept veneration but refuse logic Listen to this story: In the Garden Eden, God and the serpent were ir distinguishable. God assumed th form of the serpent as a manifesta tion of His wholeness, encompassin both good and evil. When Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation they gave in to God's negative an therefore had to be banished, becaus God must forever purge Himself His evil twin. He bequeathed this ir ternal struggle to his creatures, tha they themselves might undergo th magnificent trials endured by God God's legacy to man was the morta sin of *limited knowledge:* that whic prevents us from comprehendin Him completely.

These thoughts go on and on. write them down in a little note book I keep beside my deck of card and people assume I am keepin

track of their readings or taking down significant revelations. Only Mr. Torres knows what I'm doing. I swear he's become eerily psychic himself. One evening he asked, Have you thought about saving us from Skylab yet?

No, Mr. Torres, I've been concerned more with the problems of comprehending mortal sin.

People are rushing to church, he cried. Just this morning I saw a man by the chapel selling Skylab prayer cards for five pesos each.

Ha, I said.

Ha, he mimicked me. People are making good money out there, and that's all you say?

What do you want me to do?

I don't know, he said, scratching his head. Is there a way anyone can stop it from falling, or from falling all over Manila?

Are you scared? I asked him.

Scared enough to pee in my pants, he said. And a lot of people are, too. You've been reading the papers?

I said no.

Read the papers, he said. See what people are up to. Then wise men like you could probably think of a way to save us. You've got to do it, you know.

Why? I asked him.

Because nobody else will, he said.

The Skylab Watch Team, headed by the Civil Defense Administrator, kept radio and television viewers posted on the exact location of the wayward space station and the shifting coordinates of its impending crash. According to NASA, about five hundred pieces of debris, traveling at a maximum speed of four hundred kilometers per hour, were capable of causing injury. One or two film vaults or fuel tanks might be the size of refrigerators and weigh as much as automobiles. The area covered by the falling debris would be three times the size of the Philippines. Two weeks before the space station was predicted to crash, the Skylab Watch Team issued a reassuring announcement: Skylab would cause no radiation of any kind. The more immediate worry, it added, was the

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NOTES FOR "NEWS CLIPPINGS—IV"
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: 6. y-e.g.-of(rev.); are-an(rev.); 7. deLawd*; carted*; 8. (ris)que-E.R.; sheet*; 9. oil-rig; r.-angle*; 11. U.S.-age; trot-h.; 14. malt(by); part(rev.); 16. I'm-a-las(s)(rev.); hub-sir(rev.); 18. Dec.-E.(1)T.; ex-cite; 19. stints(two mngs.); tale* around "z" aNd E.; 20. cysts(homophone: sists); as-ret(rev.). DOWN: 1. bad-mouthed; after-taste; 2. I.R.A.-q-1; TORT-E.; 3. under-garment; decent-r(e)alize; 4. homophone: lies; rale*; 5. leg-cry, alternating letters; pun: "I'il 'ol' ladeewho"; 10. (bed)lam; tog(rev.); 12. "licit" in S.E.(rev.); h-master*; 13. s(Ure)ty; man(X)es; 15. Pi(X)els; se(tsetse)t; 17. s(urrounds)-cat; A-sic(rev.).

SOLUTION TO MAY DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 149). ALMA DENNY: THE DEEP BLACK TRACK. There are so many other ways/Of making graceful bows./What's wrong with gas or gun or rope/Or trampling by wild cows?/Please note for future use, there's/Poison, river, sword, or dirk./Don't jump in front of subway trains/And make me late for work.

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threat of widespread fires when it hit the city. Barangay Disaster Brigades were organized to watch out for fires, and during the crucial forty-eight hours air transport would be halted if the watch team received warnings from NASA in Houston.

After these announcements came in, Mrs. Cruz brought a portable black-and-white TV for us to monitor the approaching apocalypse. Roving reporters asked people on the street what they would like to do before the crash and got the following answers: (1) get married, (2) buy life insurance, (3) go home to the province, (4) get a crash helmet, (5) wait for the junk and resell it, (6) stay indoors and play mah-jongg, and (7) renew their faith in God.

Mrs. Cruz dropped in every day from then on, bringing food and asking me, every day, to plot Skylab's coordinates with my deck of cards. As soon as the television arrived, Mr. Torres became a regular, immovable fixture. He had never owned a TV, and he sat as though mesmerized by an apparition, his pale face shining in the blue light of the screen. They both needed the reassurance of company, and a national crisis seemed to underline their loneliness. It was no more than that. Every evening I invited them to join me in meditation, which I prolonged for as long as I could to calm them down and get some reprieve from the daily news.

What I didn't tell them was that each time I read the cards they indicated that Skylab would hurl burning debris all over Manila. I shunted these readings from my mind; for the first time I refused to believe anything the cards told me. I knew the contagion of hysteria was beginning to affect me. I spent hours in meditation, alone or with my visitors, enclosing myself in the blue egg of light mystics often prescribe for protection against unfavorable vibrations. I turned my mind off when Mrs. Cruz came in with the latest rumors about the crash or when Mr. Torres repeated predictions from the suddenly prescient newscasters.

One evening a week before the rash, I had a dream. I was floating n space, in an ocean of darkness. Suddenly I found all around me a ıailstorm of burning objects: coffee ıugs, space helmets, a gyroscope, a adio receiver, a urinal, a flatiron, a ›irdcage, books with their pages lapping open, a chalice, a tooth›rush, meteors, a potted cactus, a evered hand, a thermometer. They treaked all around me, falling to a iny blue globe that looked like a ıole of light. And then I saw the noon drifting behind them, a gray, ›ockmarked rock whirling slowly, ending up cyclones of khaki-col›red dust. I floated straight toward t, and I found myself hovering over ts corrugated surface. I was so close could see the dry landscape spinıing, vertically, from bottom to top like the sheet of a Pianola, and all I ıad to do was reach out and hook ıy fingers into its craters, like a bowling ball, to make it stop.

Before I knew it, people were treaming into the apartment to join ›ur evening meditations. Mrs. Cruz ›rought in three of her friends, elderly matrons abandoned by lovers nd children, seeking the comfort of ompanionship. They came in with ›oxes of pastries, thermoses full of ıice, and small talk. Mr. Torres, vho had informed the local slackers, he *stambays*, of our activities, ›rought in a couple of tattooed hugs who wanted to repent and ıurn over a new leaf. Marta, her bely now perceptibly swollen, stayed ›n after her usual readings and occaionally brought a girlfriend from he office. Each evening had the air ›f a village fiesta, with food and lrinks all around and conversations going nowhere.

I must confess that I didn't mind his congregation at all, for purely ›ractical reasons: since these peo›le started coming in, there had ›een no need for me to worry ıbout the next day's meal or even he rent—Mrs. Cruz felt it was her noral obligation, being the most inancially liquid of the people here, to shoulder my dues till the nd of the month or kingdom come, whichever occurred first. And the dislocated denizens of my apartment continually dropped modest savings beside my censer, small tokens of appreciation for the comfort of my presence but which, at the end of the day, amounted to no slim pickings. It wasn't a bad life—a bit crowded but for the moment worry-free, at least for me. My little ashram gave comfort to those who needed it, and they made life in the material world easier for me. As I read further reports of Skylab's impending crash, however, I became more and more convinced that all the hysteria running through the city was unfounded. Even my cards turned sympathetic, suggesting, at some point, that the space station would fall, just as NASA later predicted, somewhere near Australia.

I did try, several times, to tell these people that they were safe, that the whole city was safe, that they could go home and watch TV, watch Australia burn to cinders in the safety of their own living rooms. Perhaps I didn't try hard enough. Once I let them in on my dream of the moon and how I managed to hold it still. That further bolstered their confidence in my powers of salvation. And little by little I began to skew the readings a bit, telling them that the hour was near, that we had to be ready, that anything could happen. Skylab may fall over Manila, I told them, and this apocalyptic hailstorm can be deflected by will alone. I almost started to believe it myself.

My motley constituency came in early on the eleventh of July, the day Skylab was predicted to fall. I woke up to the bustle of breakfast being prepared in the kitchen, with Mrs. Cruz supervising the chores. The smell of coffee was all over the place, and steaming rice hissed contentedly in a pot. Furniture—what little I had—was shoved aside to make room for meditation. The TV was on, blaring the news. I staggered downstairs groggily, greeting each one, and ignored requests for one final reading by turning my complete attention to a table laden with buttered *pan de sal*. By mid-

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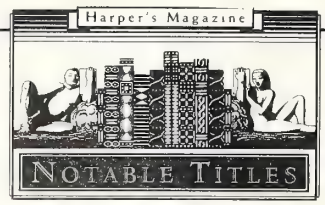
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morning, more and more people had trickled in—friends of friends of friends—and the air in the apartment was getting sticky. We took turns chanting the whole day, the drone of our supplication vibrating out into the street, where people paused and crossed themselves and hovered near the door, wanting to believe. And as the day wore on we attracted more people, some who had heard of our shelter, some I used to see occasionally on the street, and some who had little else to do but wait for the end of the world. In this crowded space we waited for the crash, and we were convinced that we could defer or cancel the event with nothing more than a mantra, a collective refusal.

Did I believe any of this? I don't know. In the back of my mind I was hoping for a patter of objects, as though someone were throwing stones on the roof; a small fire somewhere, duly doused by the disaster brigades; perhaps a crater in some godforsaken shantytown; or a splash, brief and spectacular, in the Pacific Ocean. Indeed, I was almost tempted to initiate one of these myself, short of torching the entire neighborhood. And if Skylab fell over our heads? We would all be dead and charred anyway, our radioactive souls gleaming into heaven, and I would not be to blame.

We chanted. We prayed. We fell into deep silence as midnight approached, and no footage of the crash filtered through the blinking TV screen. I looked around at their faces: Mrs. Cruz, her eyes shut tight, spouting a mantra as loudly as she could; Marta, in an armchair, her hands folded over her belly; Mr. Torres, legs spread out on the floor, his back to the wall, his eyes fixed on the black rectangle framed by the window; all the faces who had come in like stragglers from a skirmish, all the world's walking wounded.

At the stroke of midnight it was Mr. Torres who got up first. He stretched his arms, gave a prodigious yawn, and waited for the others to stand up. People began to shift uncomfortably, hesitantly. I could feel some sense of disappointment in them, mostly from passersby who had expected a spectacular display of fireworks or something close to it. Nothing had happened. I had the vague sensation that I had lost these people forever or, worse, that they felt cheated and were now seriously considering whether to tear me limb from limb.

And then something strange happened. One by one they filed toward me, and each one kissed my hand. No word was spoken. Mr. Torres patted me on the shoulder. Mrs. Cruz kissed me, wetly, on both cheeks. Each one walked out, back to the safety of his own lodging, into the secret world in which I, only I, was the last welcome guest.

Marta was the last to go. She rose heavily from her chair after everyone had gone, waddled over to me, kissed my hand as everybody else had, hugged me, and said, I felt him kick at that moment, exactly at midnight. Maybe I'll call him Skylab.

Years later Marta sent me a card saying she had found work abroad and was leaving soon, but she didn't say where. I moved out of the apartment when the rent proved prohibitive, and so did Mr. Torres, with whom I completely lost touch. Mrs. Cruz hopped from one ashram to the next, got the house and her alimony, and lived comfortably, or at least I hope she did.

I've stopped doing readings mainly because age wears down even the sturdiest of mystics. Sometimes I wonder if I believed any of it at all. In later years I must have become less of a believer and more like that tiresome species you find in academia and at magazines and cocktail parties: the sophisticated skeptic. There are times when it all seems to come back, but often I see only a blank space, vast as the sky, which I fill with imagined constellations. One of these days I'll probably buy a book and study the stars for real. It can be an interesting hobby, I've been told.

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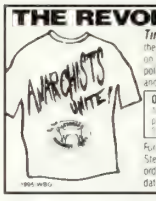
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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

from them. The final result will be higher domestic food costs and a total dependence on foreign markets. These distortions were to be addressed in NAFTA and GATT, but they have not been. Until then America must not give away markets.

Things are never as they seem. I find that especially true when I listen to any expert who wanders outside of his or her area of specialty, and I really question whether the Republicans in this Forum have any expertise other than in the science of politics.

Ralph Kingsbury
Grafton, N.D.

Biography, Then and Now

Sven Birkerts writes in "Losing Ourselves in Biography" [Readings, March] that "the great flowering of the biography genre" in our own times is the direct result of "the steadily depreciating sense of subjective coherence many of us are feeling." We write and read more and better biographies now than in the past because our days are spent "behind desks, behind counters, behind tinted glass, in front of terminals, waiting in lines, sitting in cars." Biographies, according to Birkerts, supply a sense of selfhood we lack; they are both coherent and soothing, in part merely because they record the past. "For one thing," Birkerts notes, "the circumstances of earlier times were, if not simpler, then more resonant."

Yet biography is much less important to us now than it was two hundred years ago. James Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson* (1791), sought refuge in the classical text of Plutarch: "[B]ut very often an action of small note . . . shall distinguish a person's real character more than the greatest sieges." Plutarch's *Lives* and Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* were highly celebrated cultural and didactic documents. Today the case is far different: biography, excellent biography, is produced but is read less and less, and has been all but supplanted by fiction and autobiography.

The current emphasis on fiction and autobiography suggests a new facility of imagination, a new plasticity of self. Today we believe in the authority of individual experience rather than in behavior modeled by our betters; for example, we trust that Tonya Harding has something to say in her autobiography, and that there is something to be learned from the firsthand notions of a girl with bad habits. In this, we are better equipped for life in a world where notions of hierarchy and family are in constant flux. We use novels and autobiographies to sample perspectives more directly, to practice a variety of new selves, and that—in this particular story—is a good thing.

Philip E. Baruth
Burlington, Vt.

Imprisoned by Race?

As a California correctional officer, I was quite interested to read the memo "Prison Rules, in Black and White" [Readings, February] that describes privilege restrictions placed on black and Hispanic inmates at the state prison at Calipatria while white and "other" populations went unaffected. Though the reason cited for the policies was several stabbings, the situation at the prison is actually not a riot but an organized race war between the black and Hispanic prison populations.

When breaking up a simple fight, correctional officers are trained to control the situation and to segregate and restrain the participants. When larger groups are involved, the same principles are applied. This is called a "lock-down"—the movement of participating groups is restricted and controlled.

Be assured, the Calipatria State prison intended to implement not a "racist" policy but a logistical solution to a racial problem. The fact that this policy was in effect for only three months suggests that the solution was effective. And though the policy appears "racist," failure to implement it surely would have resulted in a disproportionate number of black and Hispanic casualties. That would have been racist.

My job as a correctional officer is

You deserve a factual look at...

Jerusalem

Whose city—whose "holy city" is it?

It's twenty-eight years, since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, that the city of Jerusalem has been reunited under Israeli rule. It was understood that Jerusalem was Israel's undivided capital. But now, in the context of the peace negotiations with the Palestinians—unwittingly buoyed by the accomodating attitude of the current Israeli government—the status of Jerusalem has once more become the object of discussion.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city were rarely, if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Moslem Arabs declared their willingness to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Jews and Moslems) with its two mosques. It is the place from which Mohammed is believed to have ascended to heaven. Mohammed never set foot in Jerusalem. But aware that it was the holy city of Jews and Christians, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Moslem history did this mosque compare in significance to those in the Moslem holy cities of Mecca and Medina—cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Moslem claim. It's on the basis of this religious tradition that the Moslems designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. All Israeli governments, in their constant spirit of accommodation to Moslem sensibilities, have largely acceded to this tradition and have put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Moslem control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Moslem tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and if the Moslem Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Moslem claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Moslem Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. They have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city" and the capital of their proposed state. And it would be an insult to all Moslems to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews".

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years."

Jerusalem: never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem—in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus—has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Moslem Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country since biblical times. It was the site of one Moslem holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Moslem Arabs until most recent history.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous. And the Moslem Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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to protect the lives of staff and inmates. If I have to choose between that and appearing politically correct, I'd prefer to do my job.

C.O. P. J. Erickson
California State Prison, Avenal

A Skull upon the Desk

Can the mental health of a magazine be diagnosed by analyzing the articles it prints? Let's look at the Readings from the March issue of *Harper's Magazine*. From "Listening to Boredom" by Joseph Brodsky: "What's good about boredom, about anguish and the sense of meaninglessness of your own, of everything else's existence, is that it is not a deception." From "Losing Ourselves in Biography" by Sven Birkerts: "We need to believe in our lives as destinies, as unfolding narratives that take on and manifest meaning. And this, I fear, is what we are losing." From "Vietnam: What I Remember" by David Powell: "Watched two marines try to break open the skull of a dead Viet Cong with a large rock. Observed a marine intentionally shoot a girl four or six years of age." And finally from "The Currency of Dreams" by James Buchan: "As Byron kept a skull upon his desk, so I keep these notes in their cellophane wrapper so that I do not forget the people of Theresienstadt and my eventual pauper's grave."

I hope you're feeling better soon.

Daniel Oran
Falls Church, Va.

The Cruelest Month

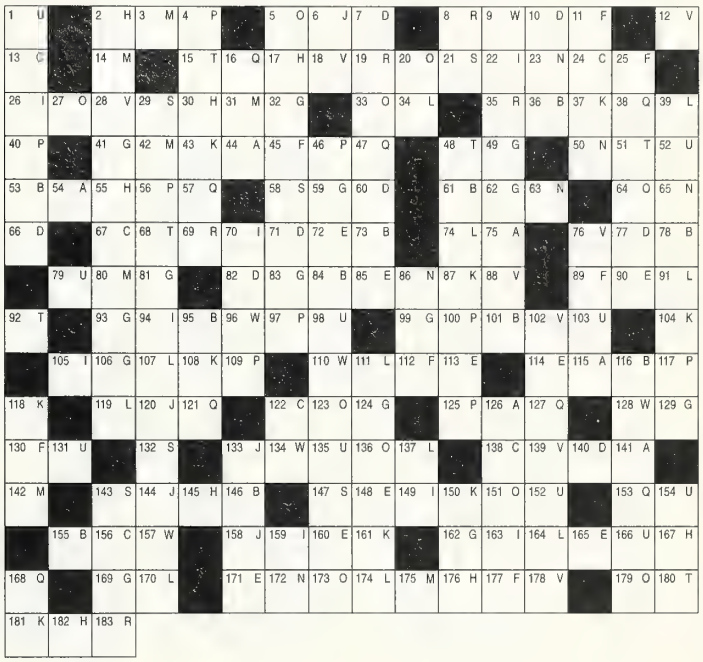
As I began my monthly pilgrimage through your fine magazine, I was terribly shocked to see the final entry of the April Harper's Index—"Rank of April among all months in order of cruelty: 1." The source, T. S. Eliot, may be reputable, but I would have to differ with the identification of him as the final authority on this subject. What about April's showers sweet? What about old Zephyrus? Perhaps a retraction is in order.

Chris Williams
Jackson, Miss.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 150

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 71.



CLUES WORDS

A. Given standing
115 126 75 44 54 141

B. With great persistence
84 155 61 53 101 95 36 73
116 78 146

C. Type of meal to make a real hit, perhaps
67 156 138 13 24 122

D. Swamped
60 140 71 10 77 82 7 66

E. Of great reliability and service (hyph.)
90 165 171 113 85 72 148 160
114

F. Matters of minor importance
112 25 45 89 11 130 177

G. One of the devils of medieval demonology
169 124 41 129 106 93 32 162
49 59 81 83 62 99

H. Got, realized
17 182 2 176 167 55 30 145

I. Georgia port on the Chattahoochie River
26 159 105 70 22 163 94 149

J. "Waxworks weren't made to be looked at for nothing. ____" (Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*)
158 144 6 120 133

K. Fettered
108 37 43 150 87 104 181 161
118

L. Rodgers and Hammerstein song from *Carousel* (4 wds.)
74 119 111 164 91 107 39 137
170 34 174

M. Port on Maui, onetime metropolitan rival of Honolulu
175 3 80 142 42 31 14

N. Midwestern river famed in song
50 65 23 63 86 172

O. Clerical
173 179 33 64 151 20 136 27
5 123

P. In the act of wrongdoing (hyph.)
40 56 109 100 117 46 125 97
4

Q. Menial, unpleasant labor
168 57 153 38 47 16 121 127

R. Ostentatious
8 19 69 35 183

S. Cheap (hyph.)
29 147 21 143 132 58

T. Popular dance with complex rhythm
68 51 48 92 15 180

U. Honorable
135 154 103 79 52 98 152 1
131 166

V. 1949 film starring Kirk Douglas
18 178 76 88 102 139 12 28

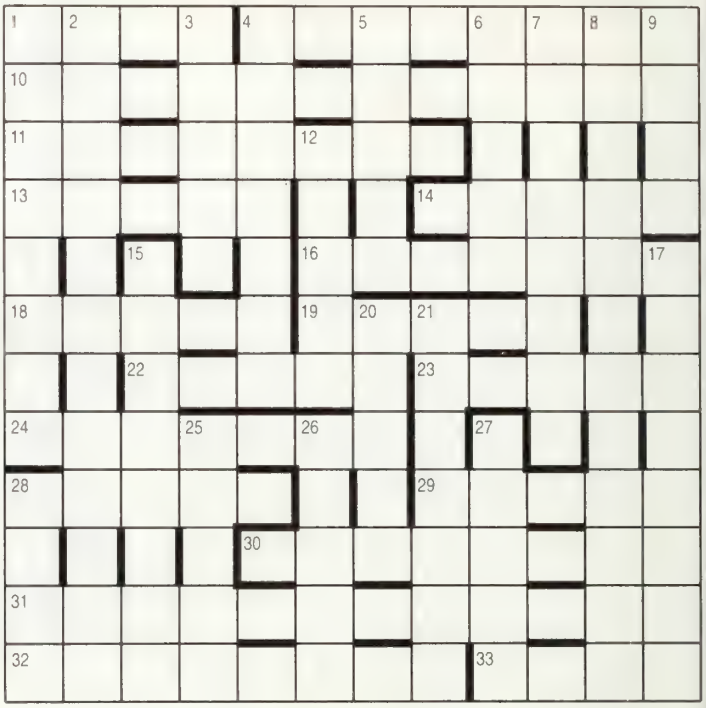
W. Show servile deference
96 134 128 157 9 110

Foursquare

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

This month's diagram has four-way symmetry; it remains the same any direction it is rotated. Each space, therefore, has three additional counterparts around the diagram. To keep things interesting, the clues to all four answers at a given location are listed together. It is up to the solver to determine which answer goes where. Clue answers include one proper name and one foreign term.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 71.



1 Across, 9 Down, 33 Across, 28 Down (4):

"Sendoff" means "justifier"
Leader of Liberal Arts
Back-talk from Senate leader playing himself?
Lily has a name for Mona

4 Across, 17 Down, 32 Across, 1 Down (8):

Donkey astride worker—sounds like it
They're boring, but not static emitters
"Ye can be transported following a state of suspension"
Those who really know the score could become triremes' merriest rimester—any of them!

10 Across, 8 Down, 31 Across, 2 Down (12):

Has no regret, moving around picture's premiere for notable person!
He quit unlimitedly, calling deceit
Fearing the law, a 1 Across might try to do this, making a home for racketeers! (two words)
Turns colors for prominent members of foundations

11 Across, 7 Down, 30 Across, 15 Down (8):

"I'm putting on a toupee like a man," said Tom Swift, ____!
One reeks of this!
Senorita changes to court reporters
Compliment for haberdashery with delicate points?

13 Across, 6 Down, 29 Across, 25 Down (5):

What a bronco does to riders sounds booby!
Upright but quiet
Rank British politician
Going over a joust

14 Across, 27 Down, 28 Across, 3 Down (5):

Ghastly Honolulu riding crops
Swear head of Paramount is seen inside entrances of houses of the stars!
Listen to someone who furnishes inflexibility
Start to grind eyeglass-hollows

16 Across, 21 Down, 24 Across, 4 Down (7):

Mean to assure time
Where people express opinions, thus having a quiet fight
Have trouble speaking street talk
Snake in a NY subway is an amphibian

18 Across, 5 Down, 23 Across, 26 Down (5):

The last word written up in a diamond ring
Middlemarch? With time that is to be translated into Latin (two words)
Celebrity, being English, takes a powder on showing up
Line one things?

19 Across, 20 Down, 22 Across, 12 Down (5):

In *The Mask*, seducer upset the work place
Bad speller? He raised the king
A lot of this shows the direction from Detroit to Washington
I'm kind of drab but self-confident when talking

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Foursquare," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the April puzzle, "Quo Vadis?," are Richard Lang, Stamford, Connecticut; James Colgrove, San Francisco, California; and Evan Solomon, [illegible]

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The Message of the Oklahoma Bombing
By Lewis H. Lapham

◆

DANCING WITH HEADHUNTERS
Scenes from the Downsized Life
By G. J. Meyers

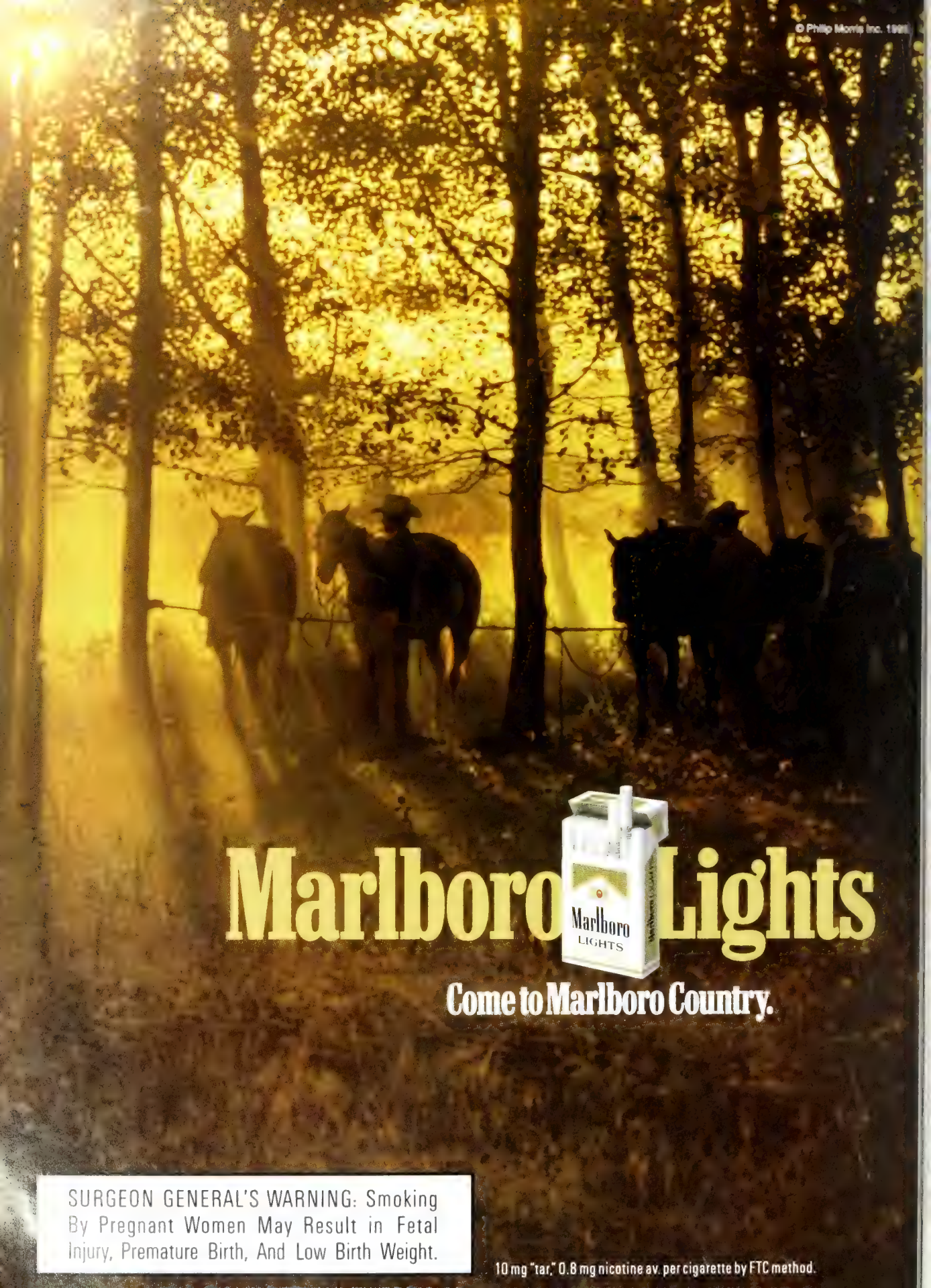
TOXIC DREAMS
A California Town Finds Meaning in an Acid Pit
By Jack Hitt

MODERN VICTORIANS
A review by Marilynne Robinson

Also: John Updike, Lynn Freed, and Allen Ginsberg

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LETTERS

Past Tense

Let's give *Harper's Magazine* the benefit of the doubt and assume that printing Frederick Turner's essay "The Freedoms of the Past: On the Advantage of Looking Backward" [April] ten years out of date is a clever joke about anachronism. Because what would have sounded old and cranky in 1985, when the "postmodernism is scary" debate was current, now has a certain antique cachet. The heavily tenured Turner wants to believe that the new academics are studying the past less. That might have been possible when Turner was hired, but in the mid-Nineties, with six hundred a typical figure for the number of applicants for a single teaching job in a university English department, we have to know our past *and* our postmodernism. Down here in the real, untenured world, we're teaching and publishing the past more than ever. We just happen to believe that the past has to be explored without reference to sloppy clichés, like the "brilliance" of certain cultures and the "national soul" of others. I require my undergraduates to know what's inadequate and nostalgic about such claims. Maybe it's time for our elders to do their homework, or at least read ours, before they publish their old lecture notes in a national magazine.

David K. Thomson
Princeton, N.J.

Harper's Magazine *welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.*

Frederick Turner misses two important points in his essay:

First, postmodernists have not turned academic departments into "ideological re-education camps." They simply acknowledge that *every* version of the past is *necessarily* political and that all the institutions Turner praises (universities, museums, etc.) have *always* been designed to disseminate ideology. For Turner to deny this by whining about postmodernism is nothing short of ignorance on his part.

Second, why does Turner confine himself to the world of "high" art? Hip-hop music is a perfect example of an art form that brings the past to life, through creative appropriation, with affection and humor. Is Turner merely unfamiliar with hip-hop, or is it just too vibrant and populist (not to mention African-American) to deserve the cultural merit he reserves for stodgy, uncontroversial Eliot, Shakespeare, Cézanne, and Mozart?

Ben Chesluk
Austin, Tex.

As I read Frederick Turner's essay, I thought for a moment I was reading William F. Buckley. Although I am a college graduate, somewhat well read, and a writer of sorts, I spent most of my time looking up words I have seldom, if ever, seen in print. Turner could have saved me a lot of time and energy had he simply written what is engraved in stone in front of the National Archives in Washington, D.C.: "What is past is prologue. Study the past."

Samuel Montague
Overland Park, Kans.

Future Tense

Did the editors deliberately plan the juxtaposition of George Saunders's futuristic novella *Bounty* and Frederick Turner's essay "The Freedoms of the Past" in the April issue? If so, it was very effective. However, I'm inclined to doubt that the magazine published twenty-four pages of the former merely to illuminate the truth of the latter, particularly Turner's opening sentences: "What is today more boring than the up-to-date? Our sculpture, music, painting, poetry, performance art, and *fiction* (emphasis added) all tread the same postmodern circle." How right he is!

Nicholas C. Brown
Lancaster, Pa.

George Saunders's novella is useful for what it tells us about the state of mind of the author, of the contemporary upper-middle-class person, and the state of contemporary literature.

Bounty is an exhibition of literary skill and authorial "concern," a fast-paced, hip facsimile of narrative drama. The reader is meant not to be moved by the work—or convinced by it—but merely impressed. The futuristic world Saunders draws is so exaggerated, so unreal, that it lacks any value as a frightening portent of "things to come." What the novella reveals is not that America's chemical and nuclear refuse may turn its citizens into grotesque monsters, or that today's skewed economic system may turn some of us into actual slaves, but that Saunders himself is a scared bourgeois living in an antiseptic fantasyland. Like genteel people everywhere, he worries about his idealized world coming to an end, and is obsessed with thoughts of corruption and uncleanliness. There exist real environmental, economic, and political dangers, of course, that should be rationally attacked and held aloft for public disgust. *Bounty* doesn't do this.

Curiously, for an author so ostensibly concerned with nature—with the change of our world from the natural and real to the technologically altered and artificial—there is not one genuine description or character convincingly taken from direct real-world experience, not one genuine thought or emotion expressed. What we have instead is a cute presentation of a cynically scarred, knowing personality. What we have is a pose.

If this is the future of literature, then literature is as dead as the future George Saunders presents.

Karl Wenclas
Detroit

Bounty is a vision of post-Gingrich America, complete with Newt's division of society into the Normal and the Flawed. In fact, isn't there something about state-proscribed identification bracelets in the fine print of the Contract with America?

James Collier
Ft. Worth, Tex.

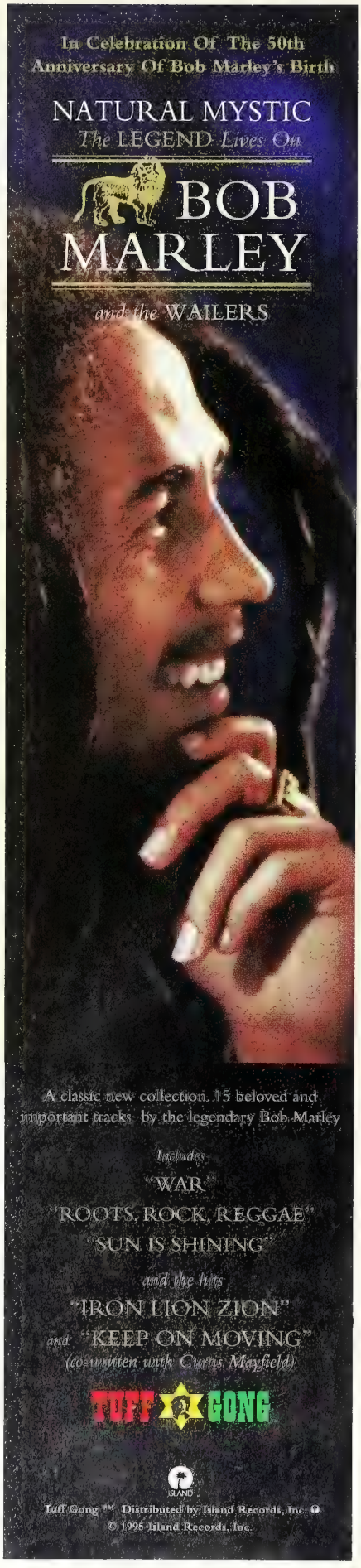
Teaching AIDS

Walt Odets's essay "The Fatal Mistakes of AIDS Education" [Readings, May] was perhaps the most poorly reasoned attack on education that I have ever read in a national publication. Few would deny that there are a substantial number of faults in our current educational system, but this essay misses them all.

Odets presents the premise that by failing to give the odds of HIV transmission for specific acts without condoms (presuming that we know them with precision in the first place), the system unreasonably demands condoms for all acts. Since, according to Odets, this is an unattainable goal, all hope is lost and condom use is abandoned universally by those who are frustrated. The assumption is that if probabilities were provided, practitioners could maximize their chances of avoiding HIV while minimizing their lost freedom. This reasoning is absurd.

If one plays the game long enough one will lose, just as one will lose in Las Vegas. The only way not to lose is to avoid the gaming tables. The mirror argument is that, since the gaming table always wins, knowing and following the odds only lengthen the amount of playing time and limit one's options for enjoyment.

Continued on page 89




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HARPER'S INDEX

Chances that an act of terrorism committed worldwide in the last year killed an American : 1 in 80
Chances that a fatal act of terrorism committed in the United States since 1982 was attributed to a domestic group : 2 in 3
Chances that a U.S. shooting death is a suicide : 1 in 2
Percentage of Americans who believe citizens do not have the right to buy and store "large quantities of weapons" : 71
Percentage who say armed, antigovernment groups should be infiltrated "even if it infringes on their constitutional rights" : 72
Number of suburban murder-for-hire cases filed with U.S. law enforcement agencies since 1988 : 1,053
Number of convicted felons who ran for the position of Chicago alderman this year : 5
Estimated property damage caused in a New York suburb last spring by a man firing a slingshot from his Lincoln : $7,000
Ratio of children's emergency-room visits for injuries related to fireworks last year to those related to "desk supplies" : 1:5
Estimated number of concurrent "killer bee" stings that a healthy adult human can survive : 1,300
Average number of times a commercial beekeeper is stung each year : 400
Number of patients referred to Norway's new hypochondria clinic since it opened in March : 23
Number of years Jeanne Louise Calment, France's oldest woman, smoked cigarettes before she quit in 1993 : 98
Change since 1976 in the percentage of white American high school seniors who smoke : –7.5
Change since then in the percentage of black high school seniors who do : –20.8
Chances that a minimum-wage earner is over the age of nineteen : 2 in 3
Percentage of men between twenty-five and thirty-four who earn enough to keep a family of four from poverty : 66
Median annual income Americans believe they would need to fulfill their "dreams" : $102,200
Percentage change since last year in the number of Americans who say they would require $1 million to do so : +75
Percentage change in the number of rural Americans living in mobile homes between 1980 and 1990 : +52
Chances that a U.S. urban public-school student in 1909 was born to immigrants : 1 in 2
Chances today : 1 in 18
Percentage change since 1970 in the number of American children born to one white and one non-white parent : +253
Portion of the U.S. population whose ancestors came through Ellis Island : 2/5
Portion of U.S. currency held overseas : 2/3
Number of the world's twenty largest banks that are American, Chinese, or Japanese, respectively : 0,1,11
Rank of China, among the world's largest tobacco producers : 1
Rank of Brazil, among the largest tobacco exporters : 1
Percentage change since last year in retail car sales in Mexico : –42
Average annual interest rate on a car loan in Mexico : 102
Maximum price of a three-year license to sell hot dogs outside New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art : $900,600
Gallons of onion ice cream sold last summer at Vidalia restaurant in Washington, D.C. : 10
Number of people who applied for thirty-six tasting positions at an Oakland ice cream company last winter : 10,000
Number of people who developed food poisoning after attending a Connecticut Food Association reception last spring : 57
Weight, in pounds, of an apple pie baked by students at Spokane Community College last July : 33,500
Date on which the state of Mississippi ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing slavery : 3/21/95
Number of the forty-four U.S. House and Senate committees that are chaired by white men : 41
Number of the first five presidents of the United States who died on the Fourth of July : 3
Number of pollsters retained for use by President Clinton : 3
Average number of peas in a pod : 8

Figures cited are the latest available as of May 1995. Sources are listed on page 86.
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READINGS

[Correspondence]

THE NEW RIGHT WRITES BACK

From an exchange of letters between Darcy Peters, a Camas, Washington, homemaker, and her representative in the state legislature, Marcus Boldt, a Republican. Peters wrote to Boldt in March, saying she opposed a plan to eliminate the state's Readiness to Learn program, which finances her town's Family Learning Center, an adult-education and preschool center that Peters and her three sons attend. On April 3, Representative Boldt responded.

Representative Marcus Boldt:

Please do not cancel funding for the Readiness to Learn Family Learning Center.

Our family came to the learning center frustrated. Barely self-supportive, we were struggling but living with no outside assistance. My husband was frequently laid off from work, and I was a full-time mother, not working outside the home. With four-year-old twins and another child, age three, we couldn't afford to pay for a preschool program. When I went to the Head Start program, I was told that we were ineligible because we made too much money. I felt like a victim of the system.

I was thrilled to find out we were eligible for the Readiness to Learn program. My children could all attend, and so could I. My sons, Caleb, Zachary, and Nathan, have learned so much at the center. They constantly surprise me with skills I didn't even know they had. I am so proud of their success. I myself have learned a great deal as well. Being challenged academically has sparked a thirst for learning that I never knew existed in me. I have seen the world open up before me, and I feel capable of meeting any academic challenge. Furthermore, using one of the agencies I learned of at the center, my husband is making a career change, having decided to leave the construction business to become an electrician.

This has been such a valuable experience that I hope many other families are able to attend the center. Abolishing Readiness to Learn might rob another family of the chance to improve itself and reach its long-term goals. We need this program in our area.

Sincerely,
Darcy Peters

Dear Ms. Peters:

Thank you for writing to me about your concerns regarding funding for the Family Learning Center. Your letter goes to the heart of the matter in the area of budgetary reform. My positions on budget expenditures are well-known, and served in large measure to assure my election to this office.

I see that you have three children, ages three and four. You wrote that your husband is

[Poem]

C'MON PIGS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The following poem, "C'mon Pigs of Western Civilization Eat More Grease," by Allen Ginsberg, appeared in issue number 6 of City Lights Review, *published in San Francisco. Ginsberg is the author, most recently, of* Journals: Mid-Fifties (1954–1958), *published by HarperCollins.*

Eat Eat more marbled Sirloin more Pork 'n gravy!
Lard up the dressing, fry chicken in boiling oil
Carry it dribbling to gray climes, snowed with salt,
Little lambs covered with mint roasts in racks surrounded by roast potatoes wet with buttersauce
Buttered veal medallions in creamy saliva, buttered beef, by glistening mountains of french fries
Stroganoffs in white hot sour cream, chops soaked in olive oil, surrounded by olives, salty feta cheese, followed by Roquefort & Bleu & Stilton thirsty
for wine, beer Coca-Cola Fanta Champagne Pepsi retsina arrak whiskey vodka
Agh! Watch out heart attack, pop some angina pills
order a plate of Bratwurst, fried frankfurters,
couple billion Wimpys', McDonald burgers to the moon & burp!
Salt on those fries! Boil onions & breaded mushrooms even zucchini in deep hot Crisco pans
Turkeys die only once, look nice next to tall white glasses sugarmilk & icecream vanilla balls
Strawberry for sweeter color milkshakes with hot dogs
Forget greenbeans, everyday a few carrots, a mini big spoonful of salty rice'll do, make the plate pretty;
throw in some vinegar pickles, briny sauerkraut check yr cholesterol, swallow a pill
and order a sugar Cream donut, pack 2 under the size 44 belt
Pass out in the vomitorium come back cough up strands of sandwich still chewing pastrami at Katz's delicatessen
Back to Central Europe & gobble Kielbasa in Lódź
swallow salami in Munich with beer, Liverwurst on pumpernickel in Berlin, greasy cheese in a 3-star Hotel near Syntagma, on white bread thick-buttered
Set an example for developing nations, salt, sugar, fat, coffee tobacco Schnapps
Drop dead faster! make room for Chinese guestworkers with alien soybean curds green cabbage & rice!
Africans Latins with rice beans & calabash can stay thin & crowd in apartments for working class foodfreaks—

Not like Western cuisine rich in protein cancer heart attack hypertension sweat bloated liver & spleen megaly
Diabetes & stroke—monuments to carnivorous civilizations
try murdering Belfast Bosnia Cypress Ngorno Karabach Georgia
or mailing love letter bombs in Vienna or setting houses afire in East Germany—have another coffee, here's a cigar.
And this is a plate of Black Forest chocolate cake, you deserve it.

subject to frequent layoffs. You indicate that you are a "full-time mother, not working outside the home."

The concerns expressed by the taxpayers over your situation are as follows:

a. If your situation was subject to so much financial instability, then why did you have three children?

b. Why is your husband in a line of work that subjects him to "frequent layoffs"?

c. Why, in the face of your husband's ability to parent as a result of his frequent layoffs, are you refusing to work outside the home?

d. Since there is no state or federally mandated requirement that children attend these programs, why should the taxpayer foot the bill for them?

e. Since your family apparently makes too much money for assistance, why should you receive subsidies of any kind?

f. How much of the situation outlined in your letter should be the responsibility of the people of this state?

g. What arrangements have you made to repay this program at some future date?

I do not necessarily agree with all of these perspectives. But I must contend with the expectations of a constituency that is tired of paying for so many programs without any discernible return.

The voters have made it clear that, in this era of personal responsibility, life must become a more "pay-as-you-go" proposition. To put it bluntly, the taxpayers' perspective says, "This program is something that Darcy *wants* to have, and not something that she *must* have."

Thank you for your time.

Marcus Boldt
State Representative

[Memorandum]

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW: THE NEW APPROACH

From a memo sent in February to Senator Slade Gorton (R., Wash.) by Julie Kays, Gorton's legislative assistant for environmental issues. Along with the memo, Kays sent Gorton a draft of the Endangered Species Act [ESA] Reform Amendments of 1995, a bill that Gorton introduced in Congress three months later. The bill, which would drastically reduce federal protection for endangered species, was drafted not by Gorton's staff but by the National ESA Reform Coalition and the Endangered Species Coordinating Council, lobbies whose members include Chevron, Kaiser Aluminum, the Idaho Power Co., and other companies that object to environmental restrictions on logging, mining, and other industrial activity. (The lobbies are referred to in the memo as "the coalitions.") The government watchdog group Public Citizen has asked the Senate ethics committee to investigate Gorton, saying it is improper for senators "to use corporate lobbyists as extensions of their staff." The bill is expected to reach the Senate floor for a vote by the end of the year.

TO: Slade
FROM: Julie

The coalitions delivered a draft of your Endangered Species Act bill to me on Friday. Interspersed throughout the attached memo are specific questions for you on the draft bill. I know that you are anxious to get the bill introduced. It is important, however, that we have a better understanding of the bill prior to introduction.

The coalitions should have a section-by-section summary of the draft bill later today. I have provided for you a summary of the major provisions of the draft bill, as each would amend current law, in order for you to see the flow of the bill from a larger perspective.

The bill takes some getting used to. However, I think that the coalitions did a tremendous job of adopting your ideas and putting them into the bill. Please let me know your general thoughts on the bill. What don't you like? What is missing? Where can we improve? Is this what you had in mind?

I hope that you will have time to get through most of this before your meeting with Senator Johnston [Democrat J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana] at 3:30 today.

Senator Johnston may bring up the private property rights compensation provision. As you know, the coalitions believe very strongly that the property rights provision must remain in the bill. I have shared with Johnston's staff that you ran past the coalitions the idea that you thought there was a possibility that we could get away with taking out the property rights provision, in light of other bills moving separately through the House and Senate, but that you were convinced by the coalitions to keep it in.

The coalitions will be happy to delete the provision if we get a separate private property rights provision passed and signed into law.

[Pool Reports]

TREADING WATER IN THE PRESS POOL

From White House "pool reports" filed in 1994 and 1995 by newspaper and magazine reporters assigned to the White House for use by other journalists. Because of White House restrictions on the number of reporters allowed at certain events, White House journalists often form a "pool" when the President travels or leaves the White House, selecting, on a rotating basis, a small group of reporters to cover the President's activities; the pool's print reporter then issues a summary of the event to all White House print journalists, who are free to use the information without attribution in their own stories. The excerpts below were taken from pool reports gathered by the Wall Street Journal's *Rick Wartzman.*

JUNE 12, 1994

The Clintons went to Foundry Methodist Church, where Chelsea played a starring role in dramatizing some Old Testament scripture with other junior-high students, using mod language. Your pool was in the back, where it was difficult to make out the words. Chelsea, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, played the role of Samuel in anointing David. She put on a headdress and, as best your pool could tell, simulated the pouring of oil on David's head. Couldn't see the reaction of President and Hillary, dressed in a stunning lemon-yellow outfit.

One note: The sermon, by minister Betty Dunlop, was about the symbolism of the mustard seed growing into a huge shrub, to make the point that humans can grow in same way. But she also referred to another symbol—the Golden Arches of McDonald's, which she noted symbolized food. There was a little titter with this comment about one of the President's favorite eateries, as it also im-

[Interview Questions]

A CRIB SHEET FOR CLINTON-BASHERS

From a list of suggested questions for radio and television talk-show hosts who interview George Carpozi Jr., author of Clinton Confidential: The Climb to Power, *an "unauthorized biography" of the Clintons, published by Emery Dalton Books. The list was distributed to the media this spring by Dougherty and Associates, Carpozi's public-relations firm. Carpozi is a former editor of* The Star, *a tabloid; he has written biographies of Frank Sinatra, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Kitty Kelley.*

What kind of life did Bill Clinton have growing up?

What role did Clinton play in anti–Vietnam War protest activities?

Why did Clinton go to the Soviet Union in 1970 while at Oxford?

What's the story behind the so-called suicide of pregnant Elvira Susan Coleman Jenkins, a student in Clinton's law class at the University of Arkansas?

How did Clinton's twelve-year affair with Gennifer Flowers originate?

How did Bill and Hillary get involved in Whitewater, the scandal that seems to be undermining the very foundations of Clinton's presidency?

After Bill Clinton's mother, a nurse-anesthetist, lost her second patient on the operating table when she again failed to feed air into the patient's lungs, what became the bottom line in the case?

How was Bill's half brother, Roger, busted as a drug trafficker?

How did Bill Clinton reward his "closest political ally" for contributing to the governor's campaign kitty—and for paying thousands of dollars in ransom to spare Roger Clinton from certain assassination for double-crossing a drug cartel?

Did Clinton take part in orgiastic affairs with Little Rock prostitutes—and did he father an illegitimate mulatto child?

Before announcing his candidacy for president, Clinton took part in a meeting of the worldwide, ultrasecret Bilderberg Society in Baden-Baden, Germany. What happened there?

Does Clinton have anything to do with the mysterious deaths of some twenty people connected to him during his reign as governor and his ascension to the presidency?

plies huge individual growth. No comments to pool by the President at the church.

Bill Neikirk
Chicago Tribune

JUNE 17, 1994, REPORT NO. 1

Note for the press advance team [the White House officials who set up press positions and operations]: The idea of a pool is so that we can actually *see* the President, like in case something happens to him. You follow what I'm saying? Good. Because most of the time this morning we couldn't. Lots of members of the public could, and no doubt they enjoyed their view. As far as your pool can attest, which isn't far, nothing untoward happened to the nation's Commander in Chief as he ran on a rather hot, muggy morning here in Chicago, the city of broad shoulders.

Clinton left the hotel around 7:10 A.M., motorcaded the short distance to the lakefront, then jogged from the Chicago Yacht Club building, south around the planetarium, and back. After the jog, Clinton stood outside the Yacht Club building and chatted for a while. Needless to say, we were far too far away to guess at what he was chatting about or with whom.

David Lauter
Los Angeles Times

JUNE 17, 1994, REPORT NO. 2

The motorcade ride to the World Cup at Chicago's Soldier Field was uneventful, except for the thrill of going south down the northbound lane of Lake Shore's outer drive. While your pool waited inside the stadium, among the soccer fans it spotted was Henry Kissinger, whose companions appeared every inch to be supporters of the German team.

When Mr. Clinton emerged in an upper concourse, he was accompanied by Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. (For the record, Mr. Kohl really is even bigger than Mr. Clinton, although not by much.) When asked if he was a soccer fan, Mr. Clinton held the ball aloft, and Mr. Kohl followed his lead. POTUS [President of the United States] went on to demonstrate that he could palm the ball and toss it from hand to hand, admirable skills that have nothing to do with soccer.

Doug Jehl
New York Times

JULY 26, 1994

Once again, Clinton left the White House without the pool (about 7:30 A.M.), who caught up with him at the Lincoln Memorial. Possibly compensating for last night's dinner, Clinton had worked up a real sheen by the time pool saw him. He wore his favored teeny



"The Twins," by Tina Barney, a photograph on display this spring at the Janet Borden Gallery in New York City. The photograph is part of Couples, *a new exhibition by Barney that explores "the body language of everyday life."*

blue shorts and a white T-shirt. Pool got a "Morning" and two cursory waves from him as he ran along the Potomac, and even the homeless man on the bench near the Kutz Bridge paid him no heed.

Later, a group from Pauline Baptist Church in Monticello, Arkansas—on their way to stand in line for a White House tour—saw him across the street and, naturally, did the "pig sooey" Razorback yell. Clinton crossed the street, of course, and was delighted to find out that they were from Monticello. "I used to live in Monticello," he said several times in a tone of wonderment. He posed for a picture with all twenty-nine of them.

Ann McFeatters
Scripps Howard Newspapers

DECEMBER 13, 1994

Brisk jog. No sweat. President got a fifteen-minute head start on unsuspecting pool, who caught up to him at the Reflecting Pool at about 7:25 A.M. He ran alone, except for agents, and did three laps past the Lincoln Memorial before jogging back up 17th Street. He was unresponsive to questions about Agriculture Secretary or tax cut. "Too cold for you guys to be out here," he said on first pass. "We've got to get warm." After that, nothing.

Frank Murray
Washington Times

MARCH 30, 1995

The morning pool in Tallahassee, Florida, was a blur of events, whose unifying theme was that they amounted to nothing. POTUS emerged from Governor Chiles's residence about 7:30 A.M. and motorcaded to nearby Lake Ella Park, where he jogged around the lake four times. He ignored a shouted question about Guatemala as he waddled by.

John Harris
Washington Post

APRIL 14, 1995

Just before departure for Camp David, Mrs. Clinton did a photo session in the sculpture garden, and POTUS ambled over to take a look.

Ever since she was a little girl, Anne Parker has wanted to fly. She signed up for flight training just as soon as she could. Climbed into most everything that had wings. Then she visited one of our retailers and test-piloted a Saturn SC2.

It must have been a successful sortie, because Anne bought the coupe and she's been conducting low-level maneuvers ever since. You can't compare it to pulling 9 g's in a jet—"That would be silly," says Anne—but with its 124-horsepower, 16-valve dual-overhead-cam engine, well, it's still quite a thrill.

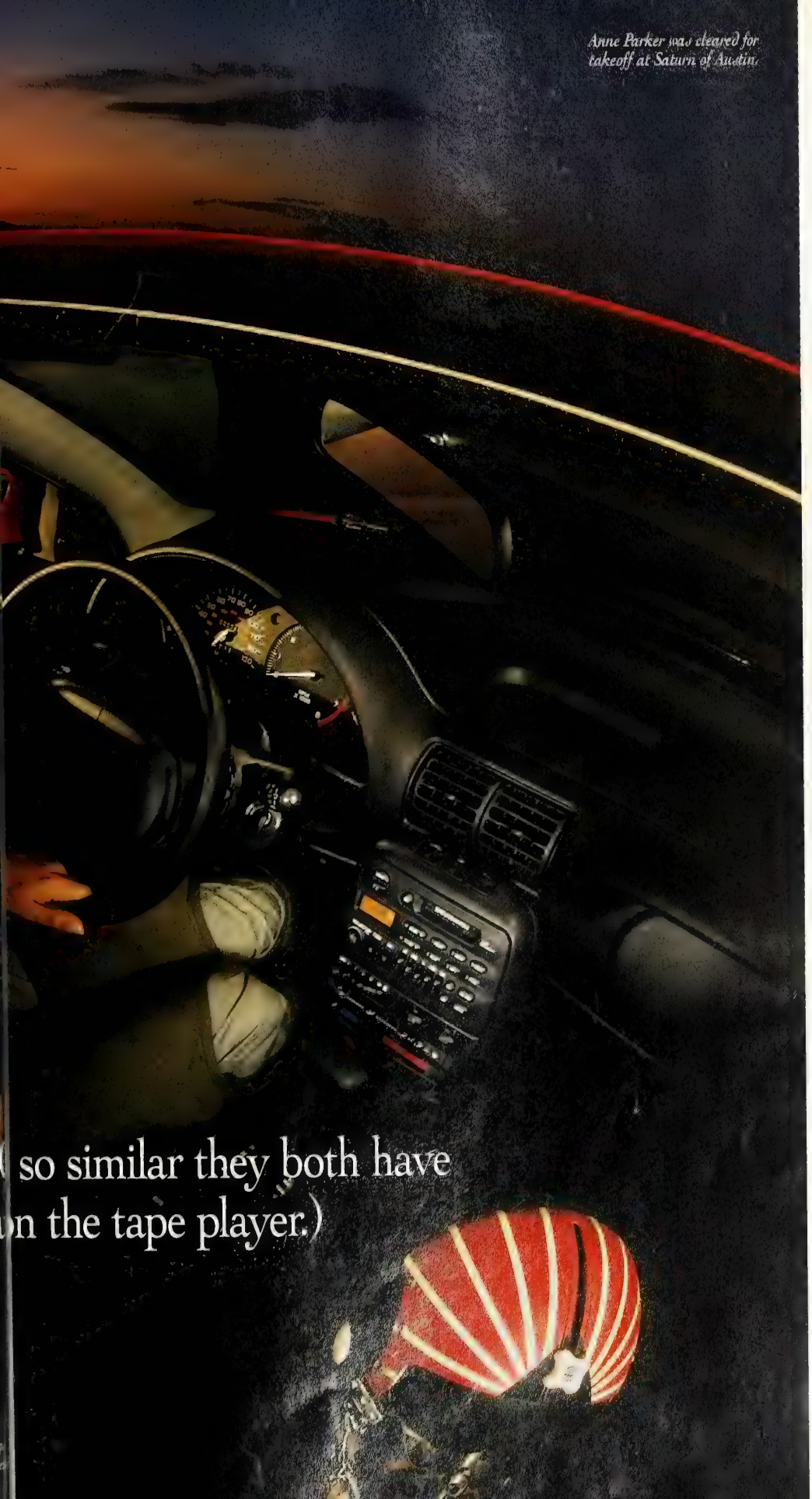
Especially now. See, Anne's not piloting planes anymore. A promotion has landed her behind a desk in San Antonio. A good job—air crew selection research. Then again, it's not exactly the same as throttling up at 30,000 feet.

All the more reason why she likes her Saturn. From where she sits, the gauges are easy to read, the controls are well-placed and the AM/FM stereo and cassette deck come through loud and clear.

The cockpit of an F-16 and Anne Parker's Saturn S
an eject button. (Okay, so ou

Still, as Anne says, comparing a Saturn to a jet is a bit of a stretch. That supersonic number goes for about $25 million. The SC2? Well, you'll see it's considerably less.

Anne Parker is pictured with a 1995 Saturn SC2. M.S.R.P. for the 1995 Saturn SC2 is $14,855, including retailer prep sunroof, automatic transmission and cassette player with equalizer. Tax, license, transportation and other options are e For more information on Saturn cars, please call us any time at 1-800-522-5000. © 1994 Saturn Corporation.



We'd like to think that the reason an accomplished pilot drives a Saturn has something (okay, a lot) to do with performance. In fact, to make an affordable sports car feel more "sporty" than



"affordable," we've optimized the gear ratios to enhance acceleration while still delivering good fuel economy. And we've reduced the drag coefficient from .323 to .315. Hey, every little bit counts in supersonic planes and sport coupes.

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"The one on the left here is really neat," the President said, gesturing to an aluminum sculpture that resembled a television antenna.

"I was looking at the tulips," Mrs. Clinton explained.

Thence to the Reflecting Pool, where the helicopters were waiting, since the South Lawn was being staked out for Easter egg rolling. The helicopters lifted off at 1:22 P.M. The pool resisted the temptation to compare this with the original 9:30 A.M. target departure.

Doyle McManus
Los Angeles Times

[Hairdo]

AMERICAN STYLE



"America the Beautiful," one of a series of hair sculptures by Terry Niedzialek. Niedzialek, a former hairdresser in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, used hair gel, tempera paint, and styrofoam to create the work shown above. Niedzialek chose hair as a medium for her work because, she says, "when I have my hands in someone's hair, it has a totally different sensibility than a blob of clay . . . it's alive." She claims to be "part of an unbroken lineage, as hair sculpture has been a means of expression in many cultures throughout history." The photograph above was on display this spring at the Empire State Building as part of an exhibition of Niedzialek's sculptures.

JUDD SHEAL

[Exchange]

MEETING McNAMARA

From the transcript of an April 25 exchange at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government between Robert McNamara and Maureen Dunn, the widow of a Vietnam veteran. Dunn's husband, Joseph Dunn, was a Navy pilot serving in Vietnam who was shot down over Chinese territorial waters on February 14, 1968; at the time, McNamara was the secretary of defense. Although U.S. intelligence indicated Dunn survived the attack, no rescue attempt was made, largely because of the government's fear of drawing China into the war. The exchange occurred during a question-and-answer session following a speech by McNamara to promote his book, In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam. *Maureen Dunn lives in Randolph, Massachusetts.*

MAUREEN DUNN: Mr. McNamara, you don't know who I am. But you certainly played a role in a situation that created the rest of my adult life. My name is Maureen Dunn. And I don't know if you remember the incident—February 14, 1968, "the China Incident." You, President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey, Clark Clifford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Wheeler, General Taylor, [Press Secretary] George Christian, Secretary of State Rusk, [presidential aide] Tom Johnson, and [National Security Adviser] Walt Rostow met for thirty minutes about "the China Incident." Do you remember that?

ROBERT MCNAMARA: No, I'm sorry.

DUNN: A pilot was shot down over Hainan Island. Do you remember that incident?

MCNAMARA: I'm sorry, I don't.

DUNN: Okay, well, the thing is, his beeper was heard when he was first shot down [indicating that he was still alive], and then six and a half hours later it was heard for twenty to seventy minutes. And you people sat there in that room for forty-five minutes, never using his name: he was always "the China Incident." He was twenty-five years old. So you never had a face to see. Or to know that he had a twenty-five-year-old wife and a baby, a one-year-old baby.

But I'm that guy's wife. And on page six of the classified document that I received in 1992 [an account of the meeting Dunn obtained through the Freedom of Information Act], you said, "No rescue attempt should be made. Don't go after him. It's not worth it." And all these years, Mr. McNamara, I've wanted someone who was at that meeting to

say to me, "I am sorry." And I'd like you to say that to me in front of all these people. "I am sorry." Please. I just want you to say, "I am sorry."

MCNAMARA: I have no recollection of the meeting, and I can't believe I—

DUNN: Well, it's right here.

MCNAMARA: I understand what you have, but I haven't seen it and I'd like to see it.

DUNN: It's right here.

MCNAMARA: But let me just say this: if I said it, I'm not sorry, I'm horrified.

DUNN: I'd like you to say to me, "I'm sorry, Maureen."

MCNAMARA: Well, I'll say I'm sorry, but that's not enough. I am absolutely horrified.

DUNN: Well, it's right here, sir, on a twelve-page document.

MCNAMARA: Well, if you'll let me have that, I'll take it home. I'll look at it.

[Interview]

CONFESSIONS OF A DIRTY WARRIOR

From an interview with Víctor Armando Ibáñez in the April 24 issue of La Prensa, *a Buenos Aires newspaper. Ibáñez served as a sergeant in the Argentinean army throughout its "dirty war" against leftists and dissidents. Human rights groups estimate that between 1976 and 1983, 30,000 Argentineans were "disappeared" in the campaign. In March, retired navy Lieutenant Commander Adolfo Francisco Scilingo came forward with the first public account of the military's practice, during the dirty war, of disposing of prisoners by dumping them, unconscious, into the ocean; in response to his comments, President Carlos Menem called Scilingo a "criminal" and ordered the navy to strip him of his rank. In April, Ibáñez told* La Prensa *that he had served from 1976 to 1978 as a guard at El Campito, the army's "Little Camp," where political prisoners were lodged before being killed, often in the manner described by Scilingo; Ibáñez estimated that the camp executed between 2,000 and 2,300 people during his tenure. After Ibáñez's confession, the army admitted for the first time that it had "employed illegitimate methods" during the dirty war, "including the suppression of life." The interview was conducted by Fernando Almirón and translated from the Spanish by Alex Frankel.*

FERNANDO ALMIRÓN: Why do you want to tell us about this part of your past?

VÍCTOR ARMANDO IBÁÑEZ: To vindicate the innocent. I have already confessed to God. Now I want to confess to the people.

ALMIRÓN: What was your job at the Little Camp?

IBÁÑEZ: I fed the prisoners, gave them clothes, bathed them.

ALMIRÓN: What was life like in the camp?

IBÁÑEZ: Every day was the same. The prisoners were hooded and chained. The orders were that during the daytime, they were supposed to sit in silence. Because I was there for two years, I was able to develop friendships with some of them. I talked to them for hours. Sometimes, on the weekends, I would let them tell each other stories, or I would tell them stories, and they would all laugh. Under their hoods, they laughed. Or sometimes each prisoner would sing a song. Things like that weren't supposed to happen, because they were meant to suffer. But I felt that from time to time I should offer them some kind of relief. I am not trying to appear benevolent, though. I am a sinner like the others.

ALMIRÓN: What eventually happened to the prisoners?

IBÁÑEZ: They were injected with a strong drug called pananoval, which made a real mess of them in a few seconds. It produced something like a heart attack. [The injections would leave the prisoners alive but unconscious.] Then they were thrown into the sea. We flew at a very low altitude. They were phantom flights, without registration. Sometimes I could see very large fish, like sharks, following the plane. The pilots said that they were fattened by human flesh. I leave the rest to your imagination. Imagine the worst.

ALMIRÓN: Were the flights daily?

IBÁÑEZ: No, they took place three or four times per month.

ALMIRÓN: At what time did the flights occur?

IBÁÑEZ: It was always done at night. One time we had to land in Bahía Blanca to wait for better weather conditions, and I had to sleep with sixty bodies.

ALMIRÓN: Who threw the bodies into the sea?

IBÁÑEZ: We all had to. It was an order.

ALMIRÓN: Did you rotate the job?

IBÁÑEZ: Yes. Sometimes people would visit to observe what we were doing—people who are now high-ranking military officials. But they didn't want to get too close to the door of the plane. They were scared, they fell apart.

ALMIRÓN: How were the bodies thrown?

IBÁÑEZ: We opened the door of the plane. Two or three of us would take hold of the bodies, and another two would stand by the door to

assist. Then we just threw them out.

ALMIRÓN: What did you tell the prisoners when you gave them the injection?

IBÁÑEZ: That they were being given a mandatory vaccination. But a lot of them knew that they were being terminated. Some panicked, but others challenged the soldiers, daring them to kill them then and there.

ALMIRÓN: Were there minors in the camp?

IBÁÑEZ: Yes, mostly adolescents.

ALMIRÓN: Were the adolescents also put on the planes?

IBÁÑEZ: Yes.

ALMIRÓN: You said that you want to vindicate the innocent people. Who do you mean?

IBÁÑEZ: The ones who were innocent. There were some who were interrogated and didn't give any information at all. I saw a man die on the "barbecue" [an exposed metal box-spring to which prisoners were tied and then electrocuted] without saying anything. If they didn't say anything, it was because they didn't know anything.

ALMIRÓN: Do you remember other people whom you consider innocent?

IBÁÑEZ: There was the Barciocco family. They were brought from El Palomar. I talked a great deal with Mrs. Barciocco. She was preoccupied with her cat, which had been left in the house [when she was seized by the army], and the brand-new Renault 41 parked in the driveway. Mrs. Barciocco had difficulty speaking, replacing her R's with J's. We gave the family the usual rough treatment: shut them up, put hoods over their heads, and sent them each to a separate part of the camp, where they were put in chains. That year, I remember, Father's Day fell on a holiday. I went and looked for each one of them, but they were gone. I knew they had been put on the list for the flights.

ALMIRÓN: What happened to you after they demolished the camp?

IBÁÑEZ: I couldn't progress in the military. I just wasn't inspired to do anything.

[Proposal]

WIZARDS OF ID

From an amendment proposed in March by Duncan Scott, a New Mexico state senator, to a bill addressing the state's licensing guidelines for psychiatrists and psychologists. According to Scott, a Republican, the proposal was intended to draw attention to the rise of "insanity pleas in criminal trials." The amendment was approved by the state senate but was rejected by the New Mexico House of Representatives in March.

When a psychologist or psychiatrist testifies during a defendant's competency hearing, the psychologist or psychiatrist shall wear a cone-shaped hat that is not less than two feet tall. The surface of the hat shall be imprinted with stars and lightning bolts.

Additionally, the psychologist or psychiatrist shall be required to don a white beard that is not less than eighteen inches in length, and shall punctuate crucial elements of his testimony by stabbing the air with a wand.

Whenever a psychologist or psychiatrist provides expert testimony regarding the defendant's competency, the bailiff shall dim the courtroom lights and administer two strikes to a Chinese gong.

[Essay]

DAVID KORESH AND THE FBI'S RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

From Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America, *by James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher, to be published this month by the University of California Press. Gallagher is a professor of religion at Connecticut College. Tabor, a religion professor at the University of North Carolina, was involved in the FBI's 1993 siege of David Koresh's Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas; during the standoff, Tabor helped Dick DeGuerin, Koresh's lawyer, decipher Koresh's religious pronouncements and interpretations of the Bible.*

The FBI operation at the Branch Davidian compound outside Waco, Texas, turned out to be one of the most tragic affairs in the history of United States law enforcement. On April 19, 1993, a final assault by the FBI on the Mount Carmel center led to a fire that killed seventy-four Branch Davidians, including twenty-one children. Despite subsequent claims by the government that the outcome was unavoidable, the entire matter could have been handled differently and resolved peacefully. The FBI chose to



"Retablo of Maria Marcos Reballoso and Leonardo Arsola," from Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States, *published by the University of Arizona Press. Retablos are Mexican folk images painted on sheets of tin; Catholics in western Mexico leave them at church altars, along with requests or thanks for divine favor. In the retablo above, the Spanish text reads, "I give infinite thanks to the Lord of Miracles because he healed my son Leonardo Arsola, entrusted to Him, from an unknown sickness. I also hope for the return of my other three sons who are in the U.S., one with his family and the other two bachelors."*

ignore David Koresh's pronouncements about the religious significance of the events in Waco, statements that contained the only feasible solution to the crisis. The agents called to Mount Carmel could hardly have been expected to pack their Bibles, but in retrospect it would not have been such a bad idea.

On the evening following the February 28 raid by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Koresh spoke to reporters several times by live telephone hookup, on Dallas radio station KRLD and on CNN. In these interviews, Koresh provided the keys to the Branch Davidians' belief system; he explained, and would continue to reiterate throughout the negotiations, the connections he saw between the Mount Carmel raid and his reading of apocalyptic passages in the Bible. Unfortunately, neither the FBI agents in charge nor the myriad advisers upon whom they relied were able to comprehend his perspective. Had they simply made an effort to understand the Branch Davidians' beliefs, they might have avoided the tragedy of April 19 altogether.

The Waco standoff lacked many of the elements that define a hostage situation, yet from the very first day of the siege, the government treated it as a "Hostage/Barricade rescue," and called in hostage negotiators, counterterrorist units, and SWAT teams. The FBI maintained this approach throughout the fifty-one-day siege, despite the fact that, as the FBI itself later noted, "Koresh had made no threats, set no deadlines, and made no demands."

Listening carefully to Koresh's first interviews, someone familiar with biblical texts would have perceived the situation in wholly different terms than the government did. To the Branch Davidians, the only "rescue" they needed was from the government itself. In their view, the federal agents represented the evil power referred to in the book of Revelation as "Babylon." The idea of "surrendering to proper authority," as the government demanded throughout the next seven weeks, was absolutely out of the question for these believers unless they were somehow convinced that it was what God willed.

[Comic Book]

KEMOSABE NO MORE



From The Lone Ranger and Tonto, *a four-issue comic book written by Joe R. Lansdale, illustrated by Timothy Truman and Rick Magyar, and published this spring by Topps Comics. In the course of the four issues, the Lone Ranger and Tonto chase a "flesh-sucking Aztec alien" around the Old West, split up as a result of the interpersonal tension foreshadowed above, and reunite after Tonto rescues the Lone Ranger from the extraterrestrial's jaws. In an introductory note, Lansdale writes that as a fan of the Lone Ranger, "I was always disappointed that I knew so little about Tonto"; in the comic book, he tried to give both Tonto and the Lone Ranger "real characterization." The cursive narration in the scene above is from the Lone Ranger's journal.*

The FBI's unwillingness to engage in a discussion of the Scriptures crippled its negotiations with Koresh. Transcripts of these conversations show that much of the time the FBI either talked down to him or failed to grasp his message. The FBI report notes that his delivery of "religious rhetoric was so strong that [the negotiators] could hardly interrupt him to discuss possible surrender." The report constantly laments that Koresh "refused to discuss any matters of substance" and insisted on "preaching" to negotiators. What the authorities apparently never recognized is that Koresh's preaching was to him and his followers the *only* matter of substance, and that a "surrender" could be worked out only through dialogue within the biblical framework in which the Branch Davidians lived. In the middle of March, Jeff Jamar, the FBI agent in charge of the operation, told the negotiators not to permit any more "Bible babble" from Koresh. This order deprived Koresh of the only means of communication he valued, effectively dooming the negotiations.

Throughout the fifty-one days, Koresh talked almost incessantly about the Seven Seals of the book of Revelation, starting on the day of the BATF raid, when he announced during a radio interview that "We are now in the Fifth Seal." (One of the FBI negotiators later admitted that some of them initially thought that the Seven Seals to which Koresh referred were animals.)

The Fifth Seal in the book of Revelation takes place shortly before the cosmic judg-

ment of God; it is the last major event leading to the end of human history. The text speaks of some of the faithful being slain, followed by a waiting period before the rest are killed. Based on the Branch Davidian interpretation of events, the killing had begun with the BATF assault on February 28. In keeping with the text, the group believed that it was supposed to wait for a "little season" until those remaining inside Mount Carmel were slain as well. Their martyrdom would lead to the Sixth Seal, which would bring about the judgment of God on the world.

It was obvious, though, that Koresh was confused by the events that had transpired. His prophetic scenario did require fulfillment of this Fifth Seal, but Koresh had taught for years that it would happen in Jerusalem, not in Waco. Furthermore, from their calculations of the "end time," the group was expecting the final confrontation to come in 1995, not in 1993. Koresh was convinced that the attack on February 28 was somehow related to the apocalypse, but he did not know precisely how, and thus he was unclear as to what he was to do. He announced that he would wait for a "word from God," which would clarify the ambiguities and uncertainties of the situation outside the compound.

This, in our view, was the key to effective negotiations at Mount Carmel. Although the apocalyptic text was, in Koresh's mind, fixed, like a script written in advance, its interpretation and its precise context were variable. By controlling the situation outside the compound, the government largely controlled that context, and therefore unknowingly possessed the ability to influence Koresh in his interpretations, and thus in his actions. Unfortunately, by using the tactical maneuvers associated with complex "Hostage/Rescue barricade" situations—cutting off the compound's electricity, blaring loud music at all hours, shining searchlights in the buildings' windows, destroying Davidian vehicles—the FBI unwittingly played the part of Babylon perfectly throughout the siege, validating in detail Koresh's interpretations of Scripture.

Throughout the standoff, both Koresh and his spokesman, Steve Schneider, asked to talk to biblical scholars. On March 7, Phillip Arnold and James Tabor, scholars of biblical apocalyptic interpretation, offered their services to the FBI. Their goal was to build upon the ambiguity that they knew Koresh felt about his situation. On March 16, after hearing radio interviews with Arnold in which he discussed the book of Revelation and the Branch Davidians' understanding of it, Ko-

[Prayer]

THE MOTOR UNDER ME IS RUNNING HOT

The following prayer appears in An African Prayer Book, *a collection of "African Christian and non-Christian" prayers compiled by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and published by Doubleday. In an introduction, Tutu writes that African prayers typically reflect a worldview that "rejects the popular dichotomies between the sacred and the secular, the material and the spiritual." The prayer below has no known author; it is traditional to Ghana.*

Lord,
the motor under me is running hot,
Lord, there are twenty-eight people
and lots of luggage in the truck.
Underneath are my bad tires.
The brakes are unreliable.
Unfortunately I have no money,
and parts are difficult to get.
Lord, I did not overload the truck.
Lord, "Jesus is mine"
is written on the vehicle.
Without him I would not drive a single mile.
The people in the back are relying on me.
They trust me because they see the words:
"Jesus is mine."
Lord, I trust you!
First comes the straight road
with little danger.
I can keep my eyes on the women,
children, and chickens in the village.
But soon the road begins to turn,
it goes up and down,
it jumps and dances,
this death-road to Kumasi.
Tractors carrying mahogany trunks drive
as if there were no right or left.
Lord, there is the temptation
to take more people than we should.
Let's overcome it!
The road to Accra is another problem.
Truck drivers try to beat the record,
although the road is poor
and has many holes
and there are many curves
before we come to the hills.
And finally to Akwasim.
Passing large churches in every village,
I am reminded of you, and in reverence
I take off my hat.
Now downhill in second gear.

resh and Schneider made a formal request to discuss the Bible with Arnold. The FBI denied that request, but allowed tapes of the interviews to be sent into Mount Carmel.

And then, on April 14, following the Davidians' eight-day Passover celebration, and just four days before the FBI gas attack and ensuing fire, Koresh received his long-awaited "word from God." He released a letter addressed to Dick DeGuerin, his lawyer, that would be his final communication to the outside world. In it he joyfully announced that the group would come out as soon as he finished writing his message on the Seven Seals and saw that it was delivered to Arnold and Tabor. In part the letter reads:

> I am presently being permitted to document, in structured form, the decoded messages of the Seven Seals. Upon completion of this task, I will be free of my "waiting period." I hope to finish this as soon as possible and to stand before man to answer any and all questions regarding my actions. ...As soon as I can see that people like Jim Tabor and Phil Arnold have a copy I will come out and then you can do your thing with this beast.

For seven weeks Koresh had said, consistently and incessantly, that he would not come out until he received his word from God. Then he wrote that he had received that word and that he was coming out. The FBI immediately responded to this breakthrough with ridicule. They joked about Koresh, the high school dropout, writing a book, and labeled Koresh's "word from God" nothing more than another "delay tactic." The FBI asked Murray Miron, a professor of psycholinguistics at Syracuse University, to examine the April 14 letter and four others sent out the previous week. Miron concluded that the letters bore "all the hallmarks of rampant, morbidly virulent paranoia." The daily log in the Department of Justice report does not even mention Koresh's April 14 letter; it merely notes that "David had established a new precondition for his coming out." From the Justice report, it appears that nothing was working, that all negotiations had failed, and that the government had only one alternative—the tear-gas attack.

We now know that Koresh was indeed working on the manuscript, which he considered his divinely sanctioned task and opportunity. He worked on it as late as Sunday evening, the night before the April 19 assault, concluding his exposition of the First Seal. Those in Mount Carmel were excited and pleased by his progress, fully convinced that they would soon be able to come out peacefully. Of course, no one can ever know if Koresh would have honored his pledge to come out once the manuscript was completed. Had he been allowed to finish, though, the outcome could not have been more terrible than what actually came to pass.

[Speech]

HOW DO YOU STOP AN ELEPHANT?

From a speech given on the Senate floor on April 3 by Senator Robert C. Smith (R., N.H.), on a resolution to allow the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus to stage an event on the Capitol grounds. Smith proposed an amendment to block "the use of elephants" at the event. He spoke for forty-five minutes; his amendment was defeated on a voice vote.

Sometime this week, or whenever we do it, somewhere around fifteen elephants are going to be brought onto the Capitol grounds. Maybe it is less. I do not know how many it will be. I have not been told. I cannot find out. I would like to be wrong on the number, and I stand corrected if I am.

I cannot understand why it is so important to have these huge animals roaming around the Capitol grounds. If people want to see them, they can go down the street to the circus and see them there. But they said that was out of the question. They would not agree. So here I am.

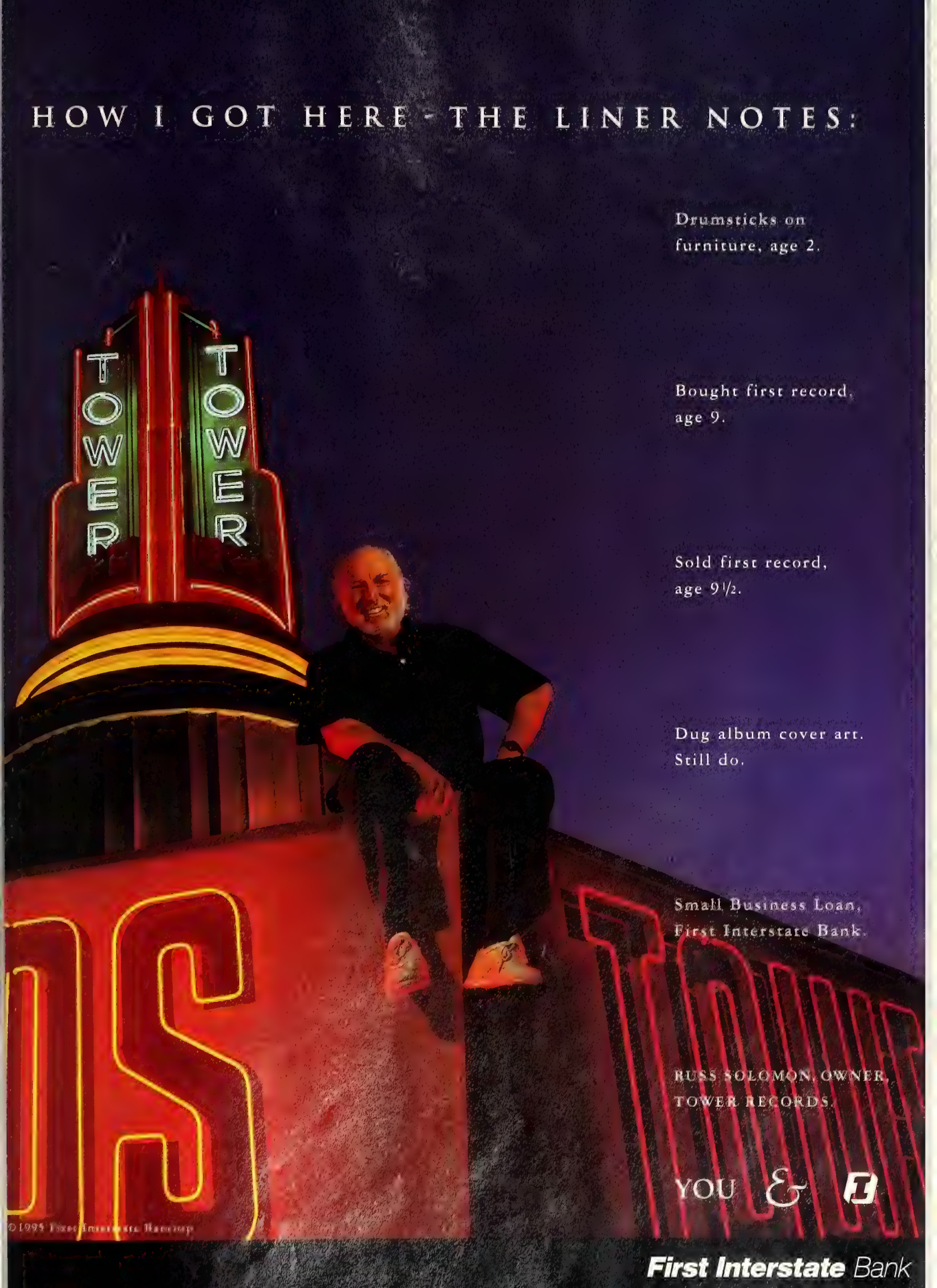
It is an issue of public safety, Mr. President. It really is an issue of public safety.

Now, it will be very easy for the skeptics, because after it is all over, if nothing happens—and I pray to God nothing does, but if it does, then do not say I did not tell you so; and if it does not, and I hope it does not, they will all say, "Well, there was Smith out there wailing away on nothing. It is irrelevant. He took the Senate's time. Nobody cares about this."

Well, at least fifteen people have been killed by animals in the last five years in circuses. Fifteen people. And I am going to go through these right now.

Two weeks ago, a circus elephant trampled two men to death in Bangkok. Okay. That was not in America. Okay. Fine. I am preparing myself for the comments that will be coming. So let us move on.

Ringling Bros. That is who we are talking about here. That is who is coming to town. Ringling Bros. Ringling's most experienced trainer, Alex Gautier, was trampled to death in 1993. Lest somebody doubt me, I have the obit-


HOW I GOT HERE - THE LINER NOTES:
Drumsticks on furniture, age 2.
Bought first record, age 9.
Sold first record, age 9 1/2.
Dug album cover art. Still do.
Small Business Loan, First Interstate Bank.
RUSS SOLOMON, OWNER, TOWER RECORDS.
YOU & FI
First Interstate Bank
TOWER
TOWER

uary on that somewhere. Let me see if I can find it. I have it right here. This is an obituary from the *New York Times*. He was trampled to death two years ago by an elephant. He had been with Ringling for thirty-five years. So it was not exactly some inexperienced kid that came out and said, "I'm going to train an elephant."

In 1994, Alan Campbell was crushed to death and a dozen spectators—a dozen spectators—were injured when an elephant with Circus International went on a rampage through downtown Honolulu. They had to shoot the animal with anything they could find—revolvers, whatever they could gear up—one hundred times before the animal fell down against a car, and even then they could not kill it with a gun. Somebody got there with some type of drug and was able to immobilize the elephant for when they finally killed it. So one hundred times.

Was that Ringling? No. I am not maintaining that it was. It was a circus and that happened. Elephants are elephants. I do not think elephants know the difference between a Ringling Bros. Circus and any other circus. If they are asked to stand up on one leg on a barrel, I do not think they understand if it is Ringling asking them to do it or anybody else. If anybody can tell me how they know that, I would be happy to hear it.

Backstage at *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*, Yelena Aleynikova had her skull fractured, ribs broken, and a lung punctured by a Moscow Circus elephant in 1994. She is suing the circus, the show, and ABC as a result of that incident.

Schoolchildren looked on as an elephant crushed a man to death at the San Salvador National Zoo in 1993. He was the second person that this very elephant had killed.

Char-Lee Torre was kicked to death by an elephant at the Lowry Park Zoo in Florida in 1993.

And in 1992, Jubal Cox was grabbed and slammed to death by an elephant in Texas while visiting the San Antonio Zoo.

There is more.

Eight children and their parents were pinned under a fence by an elephant at the Circus International in 1994. Children.

The Gatani Circus: Elephant trainer Eloise Berchtold was killed by an elephant during a performance at Rock Forest, Quebec. The elephant stepped on Berchtold and would not let anyone near her to provide medical assistance.

I have been trying for the past several days to get somebody around this place to care about this, and I cannot do it. I cannot find anybody that cares. There is not exactly a crowd on the Senate floor right now.

I asked the sergeant at arms, "What protection do we have available to us if an elephant goes berserk on the Capitol grounds?" He refused to tell me. He did not say, "I'll put it off," "I'll tell you tomorrow," "I'll look it up," or "It is the following." He said, "I won't tell you." Period. I assume my ninety-nine colleagues do not care. They are just going to have the elephants here.

Given all the instances I have mentioned, how do we stop an elephant, Mr. President, if

[Ziggurat]

SACRAMENTS FOR A HIGH PRIEST



"Drug Ziggurat," by Roxy Paine, a Brooklyn artist. Paine's nine-foot-tall sculpture includes, from bottom to top: cans of beer, cups of coffee, bottles of wine, tobacco leaves, bottles of liquor, bags of marijuana, tubes of airplane glue, canisters of nitrous oxide, crack pipes, bags of hallucinogenic mushrooms, sheets of LSD (each tab featuring an image of the artist's face), bottles of pills, vials of PCP, and syringes. Paine arranged the substances in the form of a ziggurat—an ancient Mesopotamian pyramid-shaped temple. The illegal substances are represented in the sculpture by surrogates; the bags of marijuana, for example, are filled with dried bergamot flowers and oregano. "Drug Ziggurat" appeared this spring in Better Living Through Chemistry, *a group exhibition at the Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago.*

PAUL BRENNER

it goes berserk? What do we do? Do you use an AK-47? An M-16? An AR-15? They are illegal in Washington. A person cannot even carry them. All illegal. All banned.

Frankly, would that stop an elephant? I doubt it. I really doubt it. Do they have a bazooka? What is their plan of action? It took a hundred rounds to this poor animal here that went wild in Honolulu, and that still didn't kill it.

Overreacting, they will say. Yes, always overreacting, until something happens. Is that not the way it is?

Frankly, before I knew more about this, I thought it was great.

I know the types of criticism and the ridicule that I get. People say you are an animal-rights nut. I am not. I am not.

It is a very small thing to do, really. It is not a big deal. We just say, Ringling, come on up. Bring the clowns, bring the dog acts, bring the rings, bring the trapeze artists, and entertain the kids. But leave the elephants in the zoos and in the parks. Leave them alone.

[Erotica]

TOBACCO'S LATEST MARKETING PLOY?

From "Cynthia and Diana," an anonymous story in the March issue of Smoke Signals, *a newsletter "devoted to the Smoking Fetish" published in East Providence, Rhode Island. Each issue contains "erotic stories," lists of "TV [shows] and movies featuring smoking scenes," and news from the online "smoking fetish network."*

On the last day of orientation, new students were scheduled to meet with their advisers. Cynthia received a form saying that her adviser was Professor Diana Strong, to whom she was to report at 3:00 P.M. Dr. Strong was in the Women's Studies Department. Cynthia hoped she'd like her.

Cynthia arrived at Artemis Hall just in time. She entered the professor's office and was impressed by what she found. Seated behind the desk was a woman with short black hair that framed a serious but attractive face with brown eyes and a firm jaw. She was about thirty-five and was obviously a woman who took care of herself. She was wearing a plain yellow blouse cut like a man's shirt, the top two buttons open to reveal just a hint of cleavage.

As they talked, Cynthia was aware of being checked out, as Dr. Strong's eyes roved over

[How-to]

SPACED MOUNTAIN

From a list of methods for getting high "naturally" while riding on roller coasters, in Stoned Free: How to Get High Without Drugs, *by Patrick Wells with Douglas Rushkoff, published by Loompanics Unlimited in Port Townsend, Washington. According to the authors, nonchemical highs do not have "the side-effects associated with [drugs]" and are "almost invariably more enjoyable, longer lasting, and of greater benefit to one's quality of life." Roller coasters, they write, provide some of "the easiest and most accessible rushes available."*

SENSORY DEPRIVATION

Ride the roller coaster with your palms over your eye sockets, your fingers resting on your forehead, and your thumbs closing the little flaps over the holes in your ears. If possible, breathe through your nose with your mouth closed. Do not scream. When the ride comes to a stop, slowly remove your hands. You will be in a highly altered state of consciousness for the next few minutes. Try to maintain this state even after the ride is over. Walk slowly off the coaster and into the thick of the crowd. Don't talk for a few minutes. Just observe everyone and everything around you.

LOOKING UP

This one is tricky. It only works on rides where you don't need to hold onto a lap bar. Clasp your hands behind your neck and lean your head back into the cradle that your palms form. Bring your elbows forward to support your jaw. Do not arch your back; press yourself firmly against your seat. Look straight up at the sky for the entire ride.

HYPERVENTILATION

On the way up, breathe as deeply and as quickly as you can. When you reach the top of the first drop, draw in one last breath as deeply as you can and hold it; then, as you begin to fall, let the breath go. Another technique is to do something like holotropic breathing—breathing deeply and quickly throughout the whole ride. Try to start as soon as you get into the car so that you are already a little buzzed when you start moving. Be very careful getting off, and hold onto the railing for a while before walking down the exit ramp. It's very easy to pass out or throw up from this one.



"3 Generations," from Jews of the 70s, *a folio of five postcards designed and distributed by Marc Alan Jacobs. Each postcard features a snapshot of the artist's family taken during the 1970s. In the card pictured above, Jacobs's cousin J.B. poses "in his bar-mitzvah best" with the artist's Aunt Jackie and Grandma Elaine. Jacobs lives in Chicago.*

her long blonde hair, flawless skin, full lips, huge breasts, and long, long legs.

Cynthia also noticed a little sign on the professor's desk: "Thank You For Smoking!" Next to it was a really large ashtray, clean and sparkling and waiting to be used.

"Please indulge yourself if you like, Ms. Harper. This office is far from being a tobacco-free zone." The professor laughed.

Cynthia took her pack of Benson & Hedges 100s from the pocket of her blouse and lit up. It had been well over an hour since her last smoke, so she really wanted one. She double-dragged on her light-up, exhaling twice through her nose, then took a third deep drag and removed the cigarette from her mouth, breathing out a torrent of smoke.

Professor Strong watched her intently, and Cynthia thought she saw the teacher's lips part in a little gasp. She took another deep and heavy pull on her B&H and leaned forward to de-ash her long white cigarette, which was already about a third gone.

"You seem to enjoy smoking very much," said the professor.

"Oh, yes. I smoke three packs a day, sometimes four. I love it. It's great."

Professor Strong smiled. "I think I could use some nicotine myself right now."

Cynthia wondered what brand of cigarettes her adviser enjoyed. She sort of had her pegged as a Marlboro woman, or perhaps even a devotee of unfiltered kings like Pall Malls or Chesterfields. But the professor reached for a big wooden box on her desk, opened the hinged lid, and took out a long black cigar. She clamped it in her teeth, picked up a lighter (which proved to be two butanes taped together), and flicked a double flame.

Cynthia watched as Professor Strong carefully applied those two long pillars of fire to the enormously thick end of the cigar, taking at least twenty puffs of smoke as she brought her titanic log to life. Then the professor sealed her lips around the end of her triple corona and took an incredibly long, deep, cheek-hollowing drag. She removed the big baton with two fingers, and Cynthia watched as the swirling ocean of rich creamy-looking smoke in Professor Strong's mouth vanished into her lungs. Looking at Cynthia, she gave a tiny sigh of pleasure and then exhaled the stupendous drag through her nostrils in three separate bursts of pungent, powerful smoke.

Professor Strong, holding her huge smoke-pole near her face, smiled and said, "Like you, Ms. Harper, I have a very deep love for the delights of smoking, and I have found no better way to indulge it than with these Casa Blanca Jeroboams, in maduro wrappers." Again a long, luxurious drag.

Cynthia felt faint. She stared at her adviser, this strong and formidably attractive woman, sitting there smoking an unbelievably huge cigar and inhaling it as if it were some low-tar cigarette like a Carlton or a Doral! And now this amazing woman was dragging and exhaling without removing the cigar from her clenched teeth, the huge circle of fire glowing crimson under the ash like a dark red sun.

"Oh, God, Professor, you smoke *cigars*!" Cynthia exclaimed, dragging her own cigarette down to the filter and immediately lighting another.

Professor Strong de-ashed her cigar, took another massive drag, exhaled through her nose and mouth, and replied, "Ms. Harper, I think we're going to get along just fine."

[Critique]

THE NOT-SO-GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

From a rejection letter sent in April to applicants for a Heekin Group Foundation fellowship. The $10,000 fellowship is awarded each year to an author who has submitted an exemplary novel-in-progress. The letter was written by Sarah Heekin Redfield, director of the foundation's fiction division.

Dear _____,

This is to inform you that your novel-in-progress was not advanced to the finalist round.

Fellowship applicants like to know why their work did not proceed to the finalist round, and though we do not have the time to give individual critiques, I can share with you the problems and trends found in the novels in this year's semifinal round.

Before I proceed, I would like to say on behalf of the foundation that we respect the courage and commitment that new writers exhibited in this year's competition. Writing fiction in the Nineties is a very difficult process. The following comments are not designed to dishearten you.

Ninety-six percent of the manuscripts we read were written in first person. It is very common for new writers to begin with a first-person work. All of us, myself included, have been

[Readers' Queries]

LOST LOVES

From the Book Sleuth column in the November 1994 issue of Romantic Times Magazine, *a monthly for readers and writers of romance novels, published in Brooklyn, New York. The column consists of letters from readers who are trying to locate a novel they once read but whose title they have forgotten.*

Does anyone know the title or author of a historical that opens with the heroine trysting with the sea captain hero in a small love nest in the woods? He realizes that he cares for her as more than just a port-side sexual convenience, but she can't afford to allow the relationship to deepen because she's hiding the increasingly violent behavior of her mentally ill father, who is the victim of advanced syphilis. The hero is part of a conspiracy that is caring for Abraham Lincoln, who survived the assassination attempt but now has irreparable brain damage.

•

I'm trying to track down a relatively recent book about two sisters who live in Louisiana. One lives in the old family plantation house with her adoptive father, while the other lives and works in New Orleans. The hero lives near the property on the bayou and is a troublemaker with a secret past. He and the sister visiting from New Orleans are attracted to each other. It turns out that the girls' father had an affair with the hero's mother, a Cajun woman, and that the hero is actually his son. I believe the hero had a wife and baby who suffocated in bed while he was at work in (I think) an oil field. The girls' adoptive mother was dysfunctional.

•

The book I'm looking for is about a man with a dark side, which he acquired after being subjected to bondage and cruelty at the hands of an insane man. When the hero is overcome by his dark side, the book refers to him as "The Beast." When he is in his normal state, the hero doesn't remember what the insane man did to him. The insane man has a full-length portrait of "The Beast" hanging in a special private room in his home. The heroine is the only person who can stop "The Beast" from surfacing. When the insane man captures the heroine, he makes the hero believe that he has eaten her by serving him food and then showing him a long braid of her hair.



"Side Stroke," by Lorraine Shemesh, part of Painted Pools, *a series of Shemesh's paintings that "explore the variations of light and the distortions that occur when figures interact in a swimming pool," on display this spring at the Allan Stone Gallery in New York City.*

taught to "write what you know." We know our lives best, so that's what we tend to write about.

But where's the story? My life, for example, from its inception until now, is not a story. It's a history, as all lives are, but it is not a story. This is not to say that there are not moments in our own lives that we can draw on when we write fiction, but we should not rely on our daily existence for fiction.

Location and setting were overplayed with sentimentality. We saw a trend in the use of houses, cars, or hometowns as a setting; many titles this year contained the word "house" or "home."

Themes this year were repeated from last year, but to a more extreme degree. Death or abuse appeared in most of the manuscripts. Characters were down-and-out in trailer parks and motel rooms. There were very few themes of hope, redemption, conviction, rebirth.

In fact, to see this trend repeated more intensely this year made me question the influences new writers are working under. Are the works we received a reflection of what we as a society are bombarded with second by second? Are these themes all that writers find engaging? Have our imaginations been extinguished by electronic media? Are writers no longer unique individuals who refuse to follow the beaten path? Is the future truly hopeless?

For historical novels the most popular date was 1914. Dogs were the most popular animal. Floral was the most popular couch fabric. Most mothers wore very red lipstick.

Thank you for applying to our writing fellowship program. We wish you the best of luck with all your future artistic works.

Sincerely,
Sarah Heekin Redfield

[Journal Entry]

MODERN TERMS

From Run to the Mountain, *the first volume of the journals of Thomas Merton, published for the first time this June by HarperCollins. Merton, who died in 1968, was a Trappist monk and peace activist; he is best known for his book* The Seven Storey Mountain. *The entry below was written in 1939, when Merton was a twenty-four-year-old student at Columbia University.*

Some words that occur to me in a list of out-of-the-way and uninteresting things, expressing our interesting civilization:

Pari-mutuel.

Totalisator.

Helicopter.

Time clock.

Spigot, winch, gasket.

Cylinder, coil, carburetor, feeder, fan belt.

Soy beans. Crude oil. Acetophenetidin. Chrome. Chromium.

Alimony, beaverboard, caffeine, adrenaline, scalpel, X ray, ultraviolet, infrared, telephoto, Esperanto, goalkeeper, pole vault, Messerschmitt, tank trap, camouflage.

Televisor, diaphragm, klieg light, macadam, guava, panda, electrocution, electrolysis, insulin, vitamin, trauma, erg, volt, dynamite, peroxide, Mercurochrome, novocaine, forceps, emery board, sandpaper, Ping-Pong, gyroscope, bathysphere, white slaves, gladstone bags, zippers, denicotinized cigarettes, condensed milk, rodeo, ribbon microphone, alfalfa, excelsior, jack, raffia, burlap, burley, cottonseed oil, diathermy, therapy, hydrogen, impulses.

Checker, engineer, air conditioning, acetylene, coke and blast furnace, rayon, TNT, shredded wheat, nitroglycerine, Rye Crisp, ballot box, box office, ticket taker, voting machine, curtain rod, fire engine, linoleum, Ovaltine, Celanese, stadium, grandstand, starting gate, puck, cleat, racquet, footfault, linesman, touchjudge, bailbondsman, pawnbroker, catcher's cage, movie projector, sound track, gamma ray, caucus, cell, convention, piston rod, observation car, roundhouse, transformer, switch, real estate, Pyrex glass, coffee percolator, mixmaster, toaster, Dutch cleanser, formaldehyde, toothpaste, Lysol, iodine, lint, occupational therapy, infantile paralysis, typewriter ribbon, carbon paper, sodium lamp, black light, silex, waffle iron, incandescent lamp, outboard motor, surfboard, aquaplane, lathe, whipsaw, jigsaw, fretwork, Baby Ruth, Mars, phenol, ambulance, skywriting, halftone, projection room, negative, developer, fixer, screen, pica, unit, carbon dioxide, incinerator, sulphuric acid, linotype, blowtorch, airbrush, paint gun, French curve, T square, U tube, diving bell, Wasserman test, vaccine, antitoxin, glucose, chlorophyll, chloroform, chloride, chlorine, zinc ointment, borax, margarine, altimeter, speedometer, propeller, carbonated water, cardboard, gasoline, power station, powerline, etc. etc. etc.

That is about all the modern words and objects I can bear to think up just at the moment.

[Poem]

THE OVERHEAD RACK

By John Updike. From the Spring/Summer issue of Ontario Review.

Worst of all, and most hated by me
as I sit docilely crammed into my seat,
crammed and strapped like a psychotic in
restraints,
are these bland-faced complacent graduates
of business school, trained to give each other
and the rest of the poor world the business,
who attempt to stuff their not one but two
folding bags
big enough to hold an army of business suits
into the overhead rack, already crammed
with traveling crap like a constipated ox's
intestine. The blond doors cannot lower,
the hats and bags of earlier arrivals
are crushed. Why don't the smug smooth
bastards check
their preening polyester wardrobes and
proliferating printouts, sheaf on sheaf,
at the ticket counter, or, better yet,
stay home and attend to their neglected wives
and morose TV-mesmerized offspring
instead of crowding their slick and swollen bags
and egos onto *my* airplane, *my* tube in space, *my*
clean shot home? Like slats of a chicken coop
overrunning with dung are the overhead racks.
If we crash, thus overloaded, the world
will yield up a grateful sigh at the headlines:
one less batch of entrepreneurs to dread.
Oh, kill, kill, kill, I think, watching the filth
strap itself in, exhaling airport beer
and nasal exchanges of professional dirt,
these fat corpuscles in the nation's bloodstream:
Oh, would I were a flying macrophage!

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SEEN BUT NOT HEARD

The message of the Oklahoma bombing

By Lewis H. Lapham

During the same week that a truck bomb murdered 167 people in Oklahoma City, Robert S. McNamara published his recollections of the Vietnam War, and for a period of several days on the television news shows the once-upon-a-time secretary of defense kept bobbing up on the screen in the intervals between the casualty reports from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The scenes of gaping ruin or of Timothy J. McVeigh under arrest were intercut with those of McNamara, at the age of seventy-eight still as helpful and eager as a new boy scout, seated in a clean and well-lighted studio telling somebody in a clean and well-lighted suit that the war in Vietnam was a tragic mistake and that it wasn't his fault if so many people had so unnecessarily died. The sequence repeated itself often enough to bring to mind a comparison between the two would-be saviors of Western civilization, the one in shackles and the other frequently in tears, who both construed heavy explosives as figures of speech. McNamara in the summer of 1965 explicitly defined the bombing raids that eventually murdered upwards of two million people north of Saigon as a means of communication. Bombs were metaphors meant to win the North Vietnamese to a recognition of America's inevitable victory, and American planes dropped what came to be known as "bomb-o-grams" on civilian as well as military targets, less for tactical than for rhetorical reasons. By no means unique in his suppositions, McNamara was both the product and the servant of a society that likes to express itself in the grammar of violence, and he was caught up in a dream of power that substituted the databases of a preferred fiction for the texts of common fact. What was real was the image of war that appeared on the flowcharts and computer screens. What was not real was the presence of pain, suffering, mutilation, and death.

A similar form of reasoning apparently preceded the explosion in Oklahoma City on the morning of April 19. According to the FBI,

Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's Magazine *and the author of a forthcoming collection of essays,* Hotel America.

THE POLITICS OF THE BOMBING WERE IN THE FORM OF ADDRESS, NOT IN THE POINTS OF ARGUMENT



McVeigh and his associates, among them another veteran of the Persian Gulf War named Terry L. Nichols, delivered a bomb-o-gram in a rented truck, turning 4,800 pounds of fuel oil and ammonium nitrate into a press release.[1] Although it wasn't immediately clear what the message said or to whom it was addressed, presumably it was meant to be understood as a criticism of the federal government. McVeigh and Nichols were known to associate with the kind of people who dress up in camouflage uniforms and believe that the Clinton Administration is a synonym for the Third Reich. Nichols had twice attempted to renounce his American citizenship, and McVeigh had been heard to talk at length about how "this country is going to hell in a handbasket." In February 1992, in a letter that he sent to a newspaper in upstate New York, he had set forth a list of opinions (about high taxes, crooked politicians, and the slipping away of "the American dream") not unlike those expressed by the members of the nation's better country clubs, who bang their fists on the bar and want to know what in God's name had gone wrong with the country since Bing Crosby died. McVeigh's language tended toward hyperbole—"Is a civil war imminent? Do we have to shed blood to reform the current system?"—and it was conceivable that he had read some of the material circulated by the Christian Coalition explaining how the decadent liberal news media sell the nation's soul into bondage, or how American presidents unwittingly serve "a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer."

But whatever it was that McVeigh and his confederates were trying to say about the country's political and spiritual affairs mattered less than the way in which they chose to say it. The politics were in the form of address, not in the points of argument, and five days after the explosion in Oklahoma City, the correspondent known to the police as "The Unabomber" entered the conversation with a mail bomb (a small, heavy package wrapped in brown paper) that killed the man who opened it in an office in Sacramento, California. The force of the explosion blew out the door and all the windows in the room, and in an accompanying letter received the same day by the *New York Times*, the author of the bomb, who apparently had been sending similar compositions for seventeen years (murdering three and severely wounding twenty-two others), offered to cease hostilities in return for a book contract and certain publication of his treatise on the evils of the "worldwide industrial system." Although presumably meant as singular and obvious statements, the April bombings (appended to the executions carried out over the last year of three people working in abortion clinics) posed a series of ambiguous questions. How do we construe the American idea of freedom, and what do we mean by democracy if we must communicate with one another by bomb-o-gram?

In what now seem like the good old days before the end of the Cold War, it was supposed to be fairly easy to know who and what was American. Americans weren't Communists. Americans were the freest and happiest people ever to walk the earth, generous to a fault, sometimes criminal and often foolish, but always fair and open-minded and on their way to a bright future. Without the operatic stage set of the evil Soviet empire, the familiar truths no longer seem quite so self-evident, and the fu-

[1] *Remarking on the traditional American use of violence as emphatic statement, Adam Gopnik, writing in* The New Yorker *in early May, put it as follows: "Last week's bombers . . . fit all too well into that bloody tradition, and are all too faithful to its code: Stop thinking of the other person as a person and start thinking of him as an occasion—a blank slate on which to inscribe a Thought for the Day."*

Illustrations by Mark Penberthy

ture has begun to look a good deal less sunny than it appears in the travel advertisements. The unforeseen collapse of the world-encircling Communist conspiracy removed the dark backcloth against which we were accustomed to project the contrasting images of American innocence and goodness of heart, and in the absence of the Russian antagonists on the totalitarian steppe, how do we recognize the protagonist on the freedom-loving prairie? What kind of people do we wish to become, and how do we know an American when we see one? Is it possible to pursue a common purpose without a common history or a standard text?

The short answer to the last question is probably no. Democracy is a difficult art of government, demanding of its citizens high ratios of courage and literacy, and at the moment we lack both the necessary habits of mind and a sphere of common reference. The marvel of postmodern communications—five hundred television channels, CD-ROM, the Internet—invites each of us to construct a preferred reality, furnished, like McNamara's theory of Vietnam, with the objects of wish and dream. The commonwealth of shared meaning divides into remote worlds of our own invention, receding from one another literally at the speed of light. We need never see or talk to anybody with whom we don't agree, and we can constitute ourselves as our own governments in perpetually virtuous exile. For every benign us, we can nominate a malignant them (ice people, femi-Nazis, FBI agents, etc.); and for every distant they, a blessed and neighboring we.

Reluctant to address the more difficult questions raised in Oklahoma, the major news media were in no hurry to encourage debate or welcome unedited opinions. It was easier and far less disturbing to ascribe the explosion to lunatics—first Muslim fundamentalists and then American extremists in various denominations—people so abnormal that they couldn't be confused with the boy next door. In support of this interpretation, the media hastily arranged introductions to a number of the country's militia outfits—mostly middle-aged men in paramilitary gear standing disconsolately around with assault rifles in Idaho or Montana—as well as some of the more offensive voices on the talk-radio circuit. As proof of the former, the readers of the country's better newspapers met James (Bo) Gritz, a former Green Beret commander in Vietnam and a founder of Almost Heaven, a Christian Covenant Community convinced that white people are the masters of the earth.[2] As an example of the latter, NBC News ran a televised clip of G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House aide to President Richard Nixon, who conducts a program called *Radio Free D.C.* in which he often and offhandedly refers to the government in Washington as a cabal of despotic tyrants bent on enslaving the American people. The clip showed him advising those of his listeners likely to find themselves under sudden assault to avoid shooting the federal agents in the chest because they would be wearing flak jackets. "Head shots," Liddy said. "Head shots."[3]

Again the medium was the message. By their very nature the television

AFTER OKLAHOMA THE MAJOR NEWS MEDIA WERE IN NO HURRY TO ENCOURAGE DEBATE OR WELCOME UNEDITED OPINIONS

[2] *Asked for commentary on the Oklahoma bombing, Gritz described it as a "Rembrandt—a masterpiece of science and art put together."*

[3] *Among the other items of interest, the newspapers printed excerpts from* Hot Talk *on KSFO-AM in San Francisco—a show on which the guests wonder whether American citizens should be paid a bounty for shooting illegal immigrants (or whether President Clinton is the sworn vassal of "a coven of Communist lesbian members of the Tri-Lateral Commission")—as well as a partial transcript of* The Bob Mohan Show *in Phoenix, Arizona, in which the popular host was complaining about a gun-control campaign sponsored by Sarah Brady, the wife of President Reagan's former press secretary. "You know, she ought to be put down," Mohan said. "A humane shot at a veterinarian's would be an easy way to do it. Because of all her barking and complaining, she really needs to be put down."*

SOPHISTICATED TELEVISION VIEWERS REMAINED FREE TO REGARD THE BOMBING AS PURE SPECTACLE

cameras couldn't help but present the Oklahoma killing as a new attraction displacing the O. J. Simpson trial at the top of the hour on CNN—not because the producers were cynical, or because they searched out subjects resembling the villains in a James Bond movie, but because everybody in the country understands by now the rhetorical devices of television news. The entire narrative could be inferred from the first five minutes of footage from the Murrah Building—the scenes of catastrophe, the obligatory interviews with local officials making the obligatory announcements, the pundits in Washington worrying about what it all means, a new computer graphic meant to hold viewer attention at least until the first commercial break. The standard packaging doesn't allow for any exceptions to the rules, and the sophisticated viewers, knowing that nothing would be said that might slow the sale of the product, remained free to regard the bombing as pure spectacle. A man had set off a bomb, killing 167 people with the force of an explosion big enough to blow a Toyota 130 miles into the sky, attacking the fundamental premise of American democracy (and thus the life and liberty of every citizen in the country), but we could choose to look upon the event as if it were another melancholy postcard from Rwanda or the first network showing of *Die Hard 2*. Perceived as entertainment, the explosion wasn't an assigned civics lesson, and well before the last of the victims suffocated under the weight of broken concrete, the story had begun to lose its audience and market share. No celebrities had been found in the wreckage, and the more exciting drama of the moment was the one about Michael Jordan's happy return to the Chicago Bulls.

Among the few journalists who wondered whether the explosion might have had something to do with the increasingly poisonous atmosphere of the American political debate, none suggested that McVeigh had campaigned for Oliver North or implied a direct connection between four thousand pounds of ammonium nitrate and the bombast of the reactionary Republican right. They pointed out that McVeigh wasn't as sophisticated as the Washington columnists and politicians who didn't really mean it when they talked about "pagan tyrants" and "jackbooted thugs," and that maybe his bomb could be understood as a work in mixed media—a crude metaphor made in a basement or a garage instead of a recording studio or a policy institute, less amusing and more literal-minded than the toy anarchism of Bob Mohan or the feckless clowning of Rush Limbaugh, but constructed with the same ideological materials.[4]

The point was well taken, but any and all speculations along such lines were immediately condemned by the prominent news media as "shameless," "transparently self-serving," "plain malicious," "absurd." George Will, the conservative newspaper columnist who also serves as the embodiment of the received wisdom on *This Week with David Brinkley*, codified what promptly became the official as well as the majority opinion. Writing in the *Washington Post* and mustering an impressive roster of historical references (John Brown, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Butler Yeats, and the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794), Will assured his readers that the "attempt to locate in society's political discourse the cause of a lunatic's action is . . . contemptible." Similar tones of voice characterized the response of the major Washington news organizations to readings of the Oklahoma City text that didn't agree with their own. The little world within the Beltway is as self-referential as the little worlds within the

[4] *Robert Wright, in* The New Republic: *"Well, certainly it's possible that nationally broadcast statements about an 'enemy' executive branch bent on controlling us could have a decisive and unfortunate influence on a right-wing libertarian paramilitary drifter who already suspects that federal authorities have planted a microchip in his buttocks." E. J. Dionne, in the* Washington Post: *"The country will do itself no favors if it evades a serious discussion of the political meaning of this evil act. It was, finally, motivated by a brand of politics not as detached from the mainstream as we'd like to think."*

talk-show nation, and official Washington declines to accept messages unsuitable to an appearance on *Nightline* or a drop-in at a Georgetown cocktail party. The capital is a city of words, but words understood as objects and tokens of power, words as ends in themselves (like fireworks or marble fountains or truck bombs), meant for display and not as expressions of thought. On the Friday after the bombing, two respondents telephoned National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation* to express inadmissible views, and both of them were quickly silenced by anchors Neal Conan and Nina Totenberg.

CONAN: Let's go to the phones now. Tom, you're on the line in Oakland, California.

TOM: . . . We have militia recruiting heavily in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay Area, and actually I run into them because we have shared problems with the authorities in that we're abused by the local government and by the federal government. . . . We would be the "Food Not Bombs"—we feed the homeless and were violently attacked by the authorities. I have no respect for the government and I'm a pacifist, and I'm against bombing. I can understand the idea that people would be opposed to the United States government, and I'd like people to reflect on the fact . . . that there were in Iraq, there were Oklahoma Federal Building–type bombings that happened every minute all day long . . .

CONAN: Tom! Tom! Tom! Tom! Tom!

(As caller's voice is fading out, we hear him say "and in East Timor" and then NPR cuts caller off entirely.)

CONAN: Good-bye, Tom. Thank you very much. Let's now go to Nick in Charles Town, West Virginia.

NICK: . . . I have no sympathy whatsoever for the heinous perpetrators. . . . It really gives us an opportunity as a nation to see that the real threats to national security in this country are internal, primarily, and only secondarily and maybe tertiarily external. And the way I would put it is if you look at what's called the quote unquote mainstream political debate in this country, it's become perfectly okay—the coverage loves people like Newt Gingrich and Dornan, and Rush Limbaugh has become a superstar, and it's clear from their rhetoric, from their propaganda—

TOTENBERG (interrupting): Now you don't really wanna say that. You don't really wanna stick Rush Limbaugh with the bombing, do you?

NICK: No. Let me put it this way: the whole political debate has been put so far to the right that it's understandable that if you tell enough people that the government is the focus of evil and that everything wrong in this country is due to the federal government, and you portray the President as some kind of a satanic figure who murders people, and, you know—

CONAN (interrupting): I'm not sure that any of the people you've identified have talked about the President as a satanic figure or that this has to do with the political debate in this country. We're going to have to take a short break . . .

CLINTON TRIED TO SAY THAT WORDS MATTER, BUT HE INCITED THE APOLOGISTS FOR THE REPUBLICAN RIGHT



President Clinton didn't have much better luck with the Washington press than Tom in Oakland or Nick in Charles Town. The bodies of the dead were still being carried out of the rubble in Oklahoma City when he told an audience of college teachers in Minnesota that the "purveyors of hatred and division" on some of the nation's radio shows seemed intent on keeping "some people as paranoid as possible and the rest of us all torn up and upset with each other." Not unreasonably, he thought the angry rhetoric harmful to the hope of democratic government—not because it was angry but because it was made of lies—and of the more splenetic broadcasters he said, "When they talk of hatred, we must stand against them. When they talk of violence, we must stand against them."

The President was trying to say that words matter and that sometimes

IT IS NEVER EASY TO BE AN AMERICAN. THE PROPOSITION IS AN EXISTENTIAL ONE, OBLIGING US TO INVENT OURSELVES



ideas have consequences, but his remarks incited the apologists for the Republican right to a fury of partisan interpretation. In line with the general muttering about "the Democrats" changing the currency of human tragedy into the base coin of political insult, Senator Phil Gramm, the Texas Republican and presidential candidate, all but threatened the President with a libel action. Newt Gingrich, the speaker of the House of Representatives, said that it was "grotesque" to imply even a rumor of a connection between forthright political speech and hateful crime, "grotesque and offensive" to associate "legitimate questions about the size and scope of the federal government" with the kind of people who dress up in camouflage uniforms or referred to "tinhorn bureaucrats" and federal "Gestapo agents." The conservative majority in the mainstream press (the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time* magazine, the columnists William F. Buckley and William Safire, etc.) cried up the same line of trembling indignation and vehement denial. The collective sophistry ignored the Republican campaign rhetoric in last year's elections—e.g., Gingrich attributing the drowning of two small children in a South Carolina lake to the brutality of a liberal news media—as well as the *Wall Street Journal*'s fondness for extreme statement—editorials promoting the rumor of Vince Foster's murder or condemning "magazines published by thirtysomething women in New York" for leading innocent midwestern girls into prostitution on Eighth Avenue—and Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, advising President Clinton last November not to visit North Carolina military outposts unless he was prepared to entertain the risk of assassination.

The denials failed as argument, but they served to reduce the threat of large and disturbing questions—the ones about the prospects of democratic government—to smaller and more trivial subtexts that could be fitted to the rules of the Washington board game and controlled by the mechanics of political spin.[5] What wasn't being said, either in Congress or on the television news, was that the spirit of liberty is never far from anarchy and that an ordinary American is apt to look a good deal more like Timothy McVeigh than one of the golfers standing around on the fairway in an ad for this year's Cadillac Seville.

On the Monday after the explosion in Oklahoma City I came across a fragment of an uncompleted manuscript that Simone Weil wrote down on a scrap of paper in September 1939:

> . . . we need first of all to have a clear conscience. Let us not think that because we are less brutal, less violent, less inhuman than our opponents we will carry the day. Brutality, violence, and inhumanity have an immense prestige that schoolbooks hide from children, that grown men do not admit, but that everyone bows before. For the opposite virtues to have as much prestige, they must be actively and constantly put into practice. Anyone who is merely incapable of being as brutal, as violent, and as inhuman as someone else, but who does not practice the opposite virtues, is inferior to that person in both inner strength and prestige, and he will not hold out in such a confrontation.

Weil was thinking of events in Poland and Nazi Germany, but the observation holds true of our own predicament in the United States—in the winter of 1778, or the spring of 1863, or the summer of 1995. It is

[5] *On a television program in late April, I said something to this effect to two Washington correspondents, and I was at once suspected of maligning Bob Dole and the American flag, of imagining a direct and conspiratorial chain of command between Newt Gingrich and a band of paramilitary units wandering with assault rifles through the Dakota Badlands. I hadn't said anything of the kind, but then neither had President Clinton or Tom in Oakland.*

never easy to be an American, not then, not now. The proposition is an existential one, obliging us to invent ourselves under terms and conditions usually adverse. We are all bound on a speculative journey, always on the way to someplace else, and when we meet one another as strangers in a bus station or an airport lounge we exchange summaries of our youth and early sorrows, the sequence of our exits and entrances, the estimated time of our spiritual arrival. What we hold in common is a unified field of emotion and a willingness to trust the reports of the other pilgrims on the road. Democracy proceeds from the premise that nobody knows all the answers, that nothing is final, and that the world is not oneself. We value the companionable virtues—helpfulness, tolerance, kindliness, the patience to listen to one another—faithfully reflected in even so coarse a mirror as the one held up to us by the soap operas on afternoon television. Revealed in the broad light of an Oklahoma day, the companionable virtues gave the lie to the caricature of demonic government loyal to the command of Lucifer. At the time of the explosion the "pagan tyrants" supposedly feeding on the substance of an enslaved citizenry had been paying farm subsidies, arranging student loans, looking after children. Weeping law-enforcement officials (a.k.a. "Gestapo agents," "jackbooted thugs") nursed the wounded and carried out the dead.

No matter how often it has been corrupted and abused (simply by reason of its being such a difficult feat to perform), democratic government retains the affection of its citizens because it attempts to rally the freedom of mind against the tyranny of money, superstition, and force. Among all the American political virtues, plain speech is the one most necessary to the success of our mutual enterprise. Unless we try to tell one another the truth about what we know and think and see (i.e., the story so far as it appears to the travelers on the voyage out or the journey home), we cheat ourselves of our courage and destroy the chance of our freedom. Because democratic institutions do not renew themselves as effortlessly as flowering trees, they require cultivation by people brave enough and honest enough to admit their mistakes and accept responsibility for even their most inglorious acts. It is never easy to tell the truth, and most of us seldom get it right, but our repeated and familiar failures do not excuse us from making the attempt. The truth is precious in even very small amounts. The lies might win elections (or sell books and spectacles and Florida real estate), but after a while, when the words no longer mean anything, it occurs to somebody without an invitation to *Nightline* that maybe Ted Koppel will listen to a bomb.



Clearly alarmed by so distinct a possibility, the Senate judiciary committee on April 27, eight days after the explosion in Oklahoma, opened hearings on hurriedly redrafted legislation meant to protect the country from outbreaks of terrorism. The bill provided the Justice and Treasury Departments with enlarged powers to keep track of any and all citizens deemed suspicious, and as I watched the C-SPAN broadcast of the testimony, I was struck by the willingness of almost everybody in the room—the senators as eagerly as the witnesses—to exchange their civil liberties for an illusory state of perfect security. They seemed to think that democ-

DEMOCRACY PROCEEDS FROM THE PREMISE THAT NOBODY KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS AND THAT THE WORLD IS NOT ONESELF

IF WE WISH TO LIVE IN FREEDOM, WE MUST ACCUSTOM OURSELVES TO THE SHADOWS ON THE WALLS AND THE WIND IN THE TREES

racy was just a fancy word for corporate capitalism, and that the society would be a lot better off if it stopped its futile and unremunerative dithering about constitutional rights. Why humor people, especially poor people, by listening to their idiotic theories of social justice? In support of McVeigh's dark melodrama about the country "going to hell in a handbasket" (a fiction only slightly different from McVeigh's or from the ones in vogue in places like Palm Springs), all present sought to magnify the threat pressing upon the United States from every quarter of the compass—"domestic fanatics and foreign ideologues," neo-Nazis, anti-Semites, members of the Ku Klux Klan, terrorists armed with nuclear or biological weapons backing up their rented trucks to the gates of once safe suburbs, drifting through the passes in the Rocky Mountains as silently as the Indian tribes that once descended on the luckless Colonel Custer. Louis Freeh, the director of the FBI, recommended supervision of any groups "advocating social or political change," and several witnesses spoke of "open warfare" looming on the horizon of the millennium. And most of them endorsed the principle of "preventive intelligence" and strongly urged a "sustained strategic approach" heavily buttressed by larger sums of money and broader permission to seize bankrupt records and affix wiretaps. The members of the judiciary committee listened to the testimony like children listening to a fairy tale, smiling and nodding at the mention of tagging explosives and decriminalizing chemicals, glad to know that here at last maybe they had found an enemy to take the place of the Russian apparition in the alien snow. Like road-show magicians doing tricks with colored scarves, the witnesses filled the hearing room with the fears that the senators had come to behold, and again I was reminded of distant worlds and soundproof rooms, of the paranoid romances broadcast to the talk-show nation and drifting like wood smoke through the militia camps in Idaho, of how easily the systems of postmodern communication make possible the retreat into the sanctuaries of the self.

Democracy was made for open country and public spaces in which people spoke to one another face to face. Understood as a means and not an end, democratic government defends the future against the past, allowing its citizens the liberty to think and make and build. But if we wish to live in so generous a state of freedom, we must accustom ourselves to the shadows on the walls and the wind in the trees. The sense of uncertainty is the cost of doing business. As has been said, the proposition is an existential one, but it doesn't conform to the temper of the times. As the world has come to be seen as a more dangerous and chaotic place than it was dreamed of in the philosophy of Walt Disney, a considerable number of people have been persuaded to think of democracy as a summer vacation, a matter of consensus and parades, and in the ensuing confusion they have come to imagine that democracy is a suburban idea and that the United States constitutes a refuge from the storm of the world.

The hope is illusory. All the police and all the armies in the world cannot save us from our own stupidity and fear. If too many of us hide in barns (or behind the rhetoric that reduces human character and history to lists of shining abstraction) the political initiative passes to the demagogues in the streets, and society falls prey to the extremists who claim alliance with the Archangel Gabriel and the absolute truth. We won't like the result, but in the meantime, while waiting for something really important to turn up (a new revolution in Russia, say, or a riot in northeast Washington), we can come and go, talking of Thomas Jefferson and the Internet, admiring one another's moral poses, dismayed by the rumors of war and secondhand smoke, wondering whether it might not be possible to put the whole of the country, or at least the lower forty-eight states, behind bars or under glass. ■

DANCING *with* HEADHUNTERS

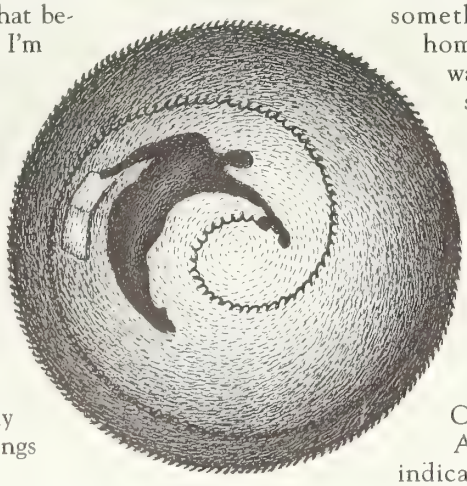
SCENES FROM THE DOWNSIZED LIFE

BY G. J. MEYER

I'm not getting any interviews.

I call and call and call, looking for leads. But when I turn one up and send in my résumé, nothing comes back. When I follow up the résumés with phone calls, secretaries get rid of me so smoothly that before I know what's happened I'm talking into a dead line.

This has been going on for weeks, and it's starting to scare me.



Then one afternoon the phone rings and it's a man I've been trying to reach, a headhunter named Roger Bullard in the Atlanta office of Russell Reynolds. He's looking for a P.R. vice president for Holiday Inns; he's seen my résumé and he has nice things to say about it.

Would I rather meet him in New York or Atlanta? He has offices in both places.

"Your choice," I say. "I'd vote for New York."

I wait while Bullard checks his calendar. "Monday in New York, then. Nine o'clock. Go ahead and make your reservations, and tomorrow call my secretary to confirm."

First thing the next morning I give Bullard's secretary my flight number, tell her I'll be arriving at my hotel on Sunday evening. She gives me the Russell Reynolds address and reminds me to be there at nine.

The offices, when I arrive, are like something out of the London home of a maharaja. All the walls are paneled the expensive way. Sheraton furniture, thick rugs, gleaming parquet floors. I'm gleaming, too: shoes, collar, cuffs. The crease in my trousers could draw blood, and I'm feeling good about the fact that despite my nervousness I managed seven good hours of sleep and an early jog in Central Park.

A mirror near the elevator indicates that I don't look like what I am: a guy out of work, thrown out of two corporations in the past three years, a little bitter, more than a little overeager.

I tell the receptionist that I'm there to see Mr. Bullard. With a slightly quizzical look she answers that he's not in yet, and I say I know I'm early. Moving delicately, not wanting to wrinkle the suit I've carried so carefully a thou-

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sand miles, I lower myself onto a leather sofa. Gingerly, keeping my fingertips clear of the ink, I open the *Wall Street Journal* on the coffee table in front of me and settle in to wait.

At nine the receptionist looks over at me, dials her phone, has a brief, inaudible conversation, hangs up, and looks at me again.

"You did say you have an appointment with Mr. Bullard?"

"Yes, I did. Nine o'clock."

"I'm sorry . . . but Mr. Bullard isn't scheduled to be in New York today."

When I call Atlanta, Bullard's secretary sounds almost as shocked as I feel. She can't understand how this could have happened. They were expecting me in New York *next* Monday. She thought that was understood.

FOR MONTHS I'VE BEEN A MAN WITH NO NEED FOR AN ALARM CLOCK

In Edvard Munch's painting "The Scream," a solitary, empty-eyed figure stands in a roadway clutching its head, mouth open wide. I hope that's not what I look like as I walk the streets of Manhattan during the next several hours, seeing and hearing nothing, waiting for it to be time to return to La Guardia. But that's how I feel. Without making a sound, I scream all the way back to Wisconsin.

Today is Friday, the thirteenth of September, the ninety-eighth day of my unemployment. Ninety-nine days ago I was vice president for communications of the J. I. Case Company, a multinational manufacturing corporation with sales of more than $5 billion a year. Three years before that I was a vice president at McDonnell Douglas Corporation, a firm that needs no introduction.

And for more than three months now I have been a man with no particular need for an alarm clock, no place where I really need to go in the morning.

This afternoon, to kill a few hours and take my mind off a telephone that will not ring, I play nine holes of golf. For the first time this year it is difficult to find the ball. Pale leaves are beginning to clutter the fairways, making small white objects hard to see. On the day I was let go, the sixth of June, the Wisconsin summer was just beginning. I had expected that finding work would take a few months, during which I would be free to sleep late, to stay away from neckties for a while, to savor the sweetest part of the northern year.

Now it's fall that is just beginning, and I'm no closer to finding work than I was a season ago. I've had shots at jobs, but every shot has missed. I never got a second chance to meet with Roger Bullard. Holiday Inns, he told me, has put its search on hold.

I keep hearing politicians say that the recession is over. A nice thought. But what I see, wherever I look, is more and more good people with good credentials being let go for the first time in their lives and not being able to find work. I know an amazing number of capable, experienced, college-educated, unemployed people. Never in my life have I seen so many people lose their jobs. And I can't name one who has found a new job. Not one.

Ninety-eight days. Three months and a week. Not a long time according to the formula that says a job search is likely to last one month for every $10,000 of annual salary. By this formula, my wait has quite a way to go. The general rule for executive "separation packages" is this: the less you need, the more you get. If your annual compensation has been in six digits for years and the first digit isn't a one anymore, you can expect full pay and benefits for a year and a half, possibly even longer. Six-figure salaries starting with one are good for about a year, six months at a minimum. If your salary is well short of six figures and you have worries about the mortgage and tuition bills, watch out: you're down in dog-eat-dog territory, where they try to get you out the door with as little money as possible.

I have been among the immensely fortunate in this regard. At J. I. Case, after only two and a half years of work, I was promised up to a year with full pay and benefits while I looked for a new job. My wife, Pam, quit her own odious job before we knew mine was in danger and is now trying to get herself established in insurance sales. I hope she succeeds. Though my separation package is a wonderful cushion, it's also temporary, and I'm amazed at how much we've grown used to making and spending every month. Rivers of money flow in and just as quickly flow out: money to keep the kids in school, to keep the house and cars going, to keep all of it insured and the IRS satisfied. I don't like to think about how quickly all this could sink us.

The first thing I felt the first time I was fired was surprise—bone-rattling shock at finding myself, for the first time since the week I graduated from grade school, without a place in the world of work. My luck had been so good for so many years that I'd learned to think of it as some-

Illustrations by Dave Ridley

thing I had earned, something I was owed. The idea that it could turn bad so abruptly was, for a while, impossible to absorb. I walked the streets in an almost trancelike state, as if I were on the bottom of the sea, cut off from everything, not like other people anymore. I started to daydream about walking through my front door one afternoon and seeing dozens of people—old bosses, old colleagues, the very people who had done this to me—leap out from behind the furniture and yell "Surprise! Surprise!" In my daydream they're wearing party hats. They explain how the whole thing had been part of some experiment, and how sorry they were to have had to put me through it. Ah well, I say with a smile, all's well that ends well.

But each time I come home, they are not there.

My first job, at age thirteen, was mopping floors in a decrepit drugstore for fifty cents an hour. Twenty years later, I was moving between jobs of a kind my parents could hardly believe, with an income that passed the furthest limits of my imaginings; I've traveled the world, won semi-high honors, had my picture in the papers, floated above the fields of Normandy in a hot-air balloon.

And now, suddenly, I call it a good day if someone will take my phone call or answer my letter.

I know that not one percent of the human beings now alive in the United States of America, not one tenth of one percent of the current inhabitants of Earth, could possibly find me an object worthy of pity. I know too that this is as it should be: imagine feeling sorry for a man whose situation is so tragic that it causes him to play golf on Fridays. Imagine feeling sorry for somebody who is still drawing full pay ninety-eight days after being fired and still has months of full pay ahead of him whether he gets out of bed or not.

And yet I feel sorry for myself constantly. And I want everybody I know to feel sorry for me.

I am ashamed of myself, of all my feelings: murderous rage, envy, fear, and, mostly, shame itself. On a simple level I'm ashamed of myself for being out of work, for getting my family into such a fix, for allowing myself to become an "executive" in the first place and then letting the whole thing go so wrong. I'm ashamed of myself for losing. When I hear the guy next door start his car in the morning and drive away, I'm ashamed to be in bed. I'm ashamed to rake leaves on weekday afternoons, because everybody in the neighborhood will know—as if they didn't already—that I don't have an office to go to anymore. The deeper shame has to do with my weakness in the face of what feels like the most painful crisis of my life but which is, in fact, a mere inconvenience compared with what millions of people face every day.

Yet I'm jealous of anybody who still has the kind of job I used to have, of almost anybody who has a job, period. My envy of the people who put me here and are still drawing their giant salaries and piling up their gigantic pension points is as murderous as my resentment.

I envy people who took fewer chances than I did and are now in the safe if charmless harbors that I set sail from years ago: the post office, the Navy, reporting jobs at daily papers. I also envy people who took more chances than I did and broke free of salaries and corporations and bullshit. I spend a lot of time wondering where I might be today if I had taken more chances.

If envy caused cancer, I'd be dead by Sunday.

Calm down, I tell myself. Stop pacing. Find something sensible to do.

But I find that I can't do any such thing.

What will I be like by Christmas?

A guy in Chicago tells me that Booz, Allen & Hamilton, the giant management-consulting firm, has a search on for a senior P.R. exec. He doesn't know who's handling it. I unearth the name of the managing partner in Booz, Allen's Chicago office and send him my résumé and a long cover letter. I send them by fax and by mail. He doesn't answer.

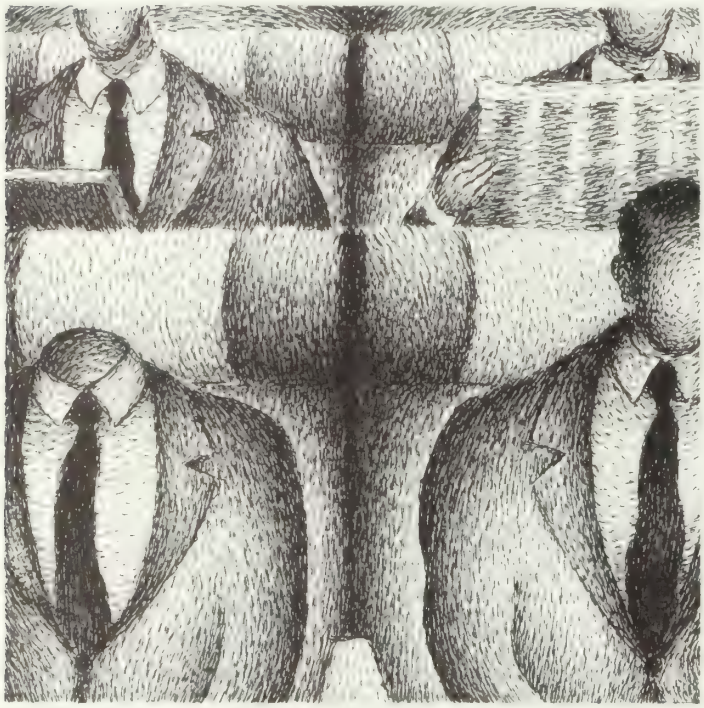
I'M JEALOUS OF ANYBODY WHO STILL HAS THE KIND OF JOB I HAD

Further digging leads to the discovery that the search isn't being handled by the managing partner after all but by Booz, Allen's vice chairman, one Cyrus Freidheim. His office is also in Chicago. Again I laboriously compose a letter, trying to make Mr. Freidheim see me as wonderfully talented and experienced, not desperate. This, too, goes off both by fax and by mail, and it, too, receives no answer.

I call Freidheim's office. He's out of town. When I identify myself and describe the things I've been sending, the woman at the other end of the line acknowledges that they've been received. I'd like to find out if anything is being done with them, but she makes it very clear that she has no interest in further conversation.

Eventually I send Freidheim a short note saying that I'll be in Chicago on a given day

and can arrange to stop in at his office if he will be free to see me. I say I'll give my note a few days to reach him and then follow up by phone. Soon I'm in a nervous lather about the prospect of having to talk once again with the icy-voiced woman.



Who are these people? What kind of people are they? There was a time, though now it sometimes seems hard to believe, when I myself was a busy man. I had dozens of people reporting to me, big and complicated projects to manage, bona fide crises screaming for attention. I had trips to take, a phone that rang twenty or thirty times a day—the whole corporate-executive fantasy. But nobody ever telephoned me without getting a reply of some kind, usually fairly promptly. Nobody ever sent me a letter without getting an answer. Nobody. Not ever. Not even the cranks. Not even the people demanding to talk with me about jobs for which they had no visible qualifications. Was I crazy?

Better crazy than arrogant, I'm telling myself. Better crazy than hard-hearted. Better crazy and a big fool than a Cyrus Freidheim . . .

But then the phone rings, and on the line is a man who identifies himself as Dick Kinser in New York. He says he's Cyrus Freidheim's executive recruiter—Good old Cyrus! How could I have judged him so harshly?—and that he wants to talk with me about the Booz, Allen job. He has to be in Detroit tomorrow. Can I meet him at the airport there?

But from the moment we find each other at the airport, Kinser is coolly distant. He grows no warmer during a long, meandering conversation in a coffee-shop booth. I start worrying about the fact that he didn't discover me himself, meaning I can never be his trophy, his gift to Cyrus Freidheim.

Will this make him want to put other candidates, ones he himself discovered, ahead of me? Should I have contacted him instead of Freidheim? Of course I should have. But how could I? I didn't even know Freidheim was using a headhunter. Freidheim or his secretary—or the first guy I tried to contact, for that matter—could have told me so. It wasn't my fault that they didn't.

Kinser asks me to mail a list of references to his office in New York. Then he changes his mind, says I should fax the list. It's unusual, in my experience, to be asked for references this early, before being interviewed by the client. It also surprises me that Kinser wants me to fax them. But that's okay. Maybe it means he's more interested than he seems, even if he'll never be able to claim credit for me. The fact that he seems to be in a hurry to check me out can't be bad news.

In the weeks after Detroit I hear nothing. I check with the people I've used as references. They haven't been called. I've never heard of a candidate not being repaid the costs of a trip made at a headhunter's request, and the cost of my ticket was outrageous because I was traveling on such short notice. But I'm having trouble getting my money back. I make repeated inquiries by phone, but I never get past Kinser's secretary, never get a straight answer.

When an envelope finally arrives with a check but no note inside, I count myself lucky not to be out four hundred bucks. And that's the last I ever hear of or from Richard Kinser and Cyrus Freidheim.

I think I can tell you how it will happen, if it's going to happen to you. The first thing they'll do, when they've made their preparations, is to get you out of your office and into a room with some geek from Human Resources.

If you're a vice president, your executioner will be a V.P. also—possibly a senior V.P. Directors are done by directors, managers by managers, et cetera, on down almost to the ranks of the blue-collar folks who even today do actual work for a living even in these United States of America.

From the moment you pass through his door, the H.R. geek will appear to be in visible pain. He wants you to understand that he, too, is a human being, a nice guy, and that his mother didn't raise him for this kind of thing.

(Is it flippant of me to call these people "geeks"? Originally the word referred to individuals who did revolting things for money at carnivals and fairs. I don't think I'm being flippant at all.)

"God," said McDonnell Douglas Corporation's senior vice president for Human Resources ten seconds before he fired me. "God, this is going to be hard." He twisted, literally writhed, in his chair. Then he swung back toward me and quickly got down to his work.

Once the geek has delivered his message and demonstrated the depths of his humanity, he'll get up out of his chair and come around from behind his desk. You'll be drawn up after him by some mysterious force resembling magnetism, and together the two of you will glide out the door and down the hall to some smaller office that you probably never noticed before, where somebody you've never seen is waiting to tell you not to worry, everything is going to be fine.

Sometimes other people are waiting in other little rooms nearby, but if you behave yourself you'll never know about them. There might be a company lawyer, for example. You won't see him unless you say something that indicates a less than perfect willingness to be agreeable. Somebody from security might be hidden in the wings, too.

The stranger awaiting you in the little office, the one telling you that everything is going to be all right, is the outplacement geek. He's been brought in, and will be paid handsomely, to "guide you through your transition."

The assigned outplacement geek will be the nicest of nice guys—one of the main reasons he was called to his profession in the first place. He'll give you a small, slightly rueful smile. He'll say that he understands what a shock this is but that he also knows something important: that it's very likely the start of a better life not just for you but for your whole family. If he was ever fired himself, he'll tell you about it, encouraging you to appreciate how beautifully that worked out in the end. Or he'll tell you about one or two of his past clients—how one of them is now King of Samoa and the other is expected to be nominated for the Nobel Prize next week. He'll ask whether everything will be okay at home, whether you expect to have trouble telling your spouse. When you say no, he'll give you his card and urge you to take things easy for a while, but then to come see him at his office.

"I know it can be hard to believe at a time like this," my first outplacement geek told me, "but it really is true that this could turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to you."

The outplacement geek wants to think of himself as a useful citizen, a kind of midwife, not as an accessory after the fact. Understandable, of course. Not many of our mothers had anything like this in mind for us when they brought us into the world. Not many of us want to do these things we do for pay.

A guy in Connecticut, a friend of a friend, tells me that Gerber Products has a search on. I wait until just after six and try to call the company's vice president for Human Resources, Curtis Mairs. Calling very early or very late in the day is a good tactic: the secretaries are usually off duty then. Today it works: Mairs picks up his own phone, and he doesn't hang up as I hurriedly introduce myself. I say I've heard he's looking for a P.R. exec. Not wanting to repeat what may have been my big mistake with Booz, Allen, I say I'd like the name of the recruiter handling the search.

"You might try Steven Seiden," he says. "In New York," and hangs up. There's a New York listing for Seiden Associates, Inc., in my *Directory of Executive Recruiters*. And it is indeed headed by a Steven Seiden. I spend much of the evening writing and rewriting a letter.

First thing the next morning I call Seiden's office and get his fax number. Then I drive to the EconoPrint shop and have my letter and résumé transmitted. Next I put both into a manila envelope, drive to the post office, and send them off by Priority Mail.

NOT MANY OF US WANT TO DO THESE THINGS WE DO FOR PAY

The next night Seiden calls. We talk for a long time. He goes through my résumé line by line, asking for details about everything.

"Well," he says finally, "all of it sounds pretty impressive. On the face of it. As far as it goes."

On the face of it? Does he think I'm pretending to be somebody I'm not?

He asks me to describe my appearance. When I do so, fumblingly, he asks how tall I am. How much I weigh. Whether I have a beard. A mustache. He asks me to send a photo of myself.

What?

We agree that I will also send him samples of my work.

Once again I sit up late composing a letter intended to make me seem brilliant and clever, motivated but not desperate. When I'm satisfied, I put it into an envelope with a fat stack of supporting evidence: corporate annual reports, articles and speeches, official descriptions of my last two jobs, charts of departments I've headed, a survey showing that business editors rated one of those departments among the best in the country after I'd been running it for seven years. Fat yellow envelope in hand, I'm at the post office when it opens in the morning.

Early the following week, Seiden calls to say he's received my envelope, has examined most of the contents, and finds it "very impressive—assuming it all checks out."

Does he think I've forged this stuff?

Days later I arrive home to find a message saying that Seiden wants me to call him.

"Listen," he says when I reach him, "I'm in a meeting and can't talk now. But I want you to know that I really am interested in you for the Gerber thing. I'll be back to you soon. This search is *not*"—the italics are in his voice—"going to go ahead without you. I'll be back to you soon—in hours, not days. You'll hear from me again in hours, not days."

Taking Seiden at his word, I begin to watch the clock. The day ends without another call. The next day ends the same way, and so does the week. Then it's weeks, not days. After a very long time I try to call him, don't get through, leave my name and number.

More than a week after that Pam and I arrive home one Sunday night and find a message on the machine. The voice of Steven Seiden says, in a bored way, that he's returning my call. He has left his home number but cautions me not to disturb him after ten-thirty New York time—precisely the time I hear the message. After a moment of agonizing I decide to wait.

The next morning I call, leave a message, get nothing back. In the evening I call him at home. His wife says in a cheery voice that he's gone out briefly but will call me back soon.

MY LETTER IS MEANT TO MAKE ME SEEM CLEVER, NOT DESPERATE

He doesn't. He never calls again. Eventually, many weeks later, an envelope arrives from his office. In it is a copy of the news release announcing that a new vice president of communications has been appointed at the Gerber Products Company.

The winner is from Chicago. I recognize his name. He's the guy who told me about the Gerber search in the first place.

Small world.

This doesn't need to turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. I'll be satisfied, I'll be grateful, if it turns out to be something less than a disaster. If it ends with me in a new job that's more than barely tolerable, with my life not totally deranged and Pam and the kids not permanently hurt. If it ends that way I will, so help me, get down on my knees in gratitude.

What I keep thinking about, though, is not exciting new opportunities or the delights that are still to come.

What I think about is Bobby Joyce.*

Bobby Joyce lived in my neighborhood when I was a kid and was a year ahead of me in high school. He was a big, good-looking Irishman of the black-haired, white-skinned, Snow White type—cocky, arrogant, unfailingly sarcastic, athletically brilliant. When I picture him I always see him chewing gum, smiling a kiss-my-ass smile. He showed us how it was possible to be cool even in a cassock and surplice. I'm sure he didn't chew gum while serving Mass, but it isn't hard to picture him that way.

Thirty years out of high school, I found myself seated next to another old-timer from the neighborhood, Jimmy Monahan, at some sort of downtown business lunch. Jimmy had been a few years ahead of Bobby Joyce in school, which put him several years ahead of me. He'd always been the friendly sort, though, even to us little guys. When I ran into him he was the advertising manager for an insurance company. He had the creased face and tired, unjudging eyes of a decent man for whom life has not been a picnic. As the luncheon broke up and we were moving toward the door he somehow mentioned Bobby Joyce—how miserable it was, what had happened to him.

I couldn't let it go; I had to ask. Bobby had become an accountant, Jimmy said, and spent decades with the same company before losing his job. After a year of failing to find a new one, Bobby killed himself. He did it by jumping off the Union Avenue viaduct onto some old railroad tracks at the northern edge of the neighborhood where we'd all been schoolboys together.

I don't know what season it happened in. But in my mind's eye I see it as a raw winter's day, a black-and-white turned-up-collar day like some scene from *On the Waterfront*. It's hard to draw a connection between the spent man I see pulling himself up onto the viaduct's

* *A pseudonym.*

concrete railing and the beautiful boy I remember.

Bobby Joyce, uncrowned king of the kids, dead of a year without work.

If outplacement resembles anything, it's probably Purgatory. You don't want to be there, you wouldn't be there if you'd been better or smarter or luckier, and the only point in being there is doing what you can to get out. And there's the sheer brutal shock of it, the difficulty of believing that you really are dead.

When you find yourself in outplacement it's because your former employers have paid to get you in. The price of admission is not trivial: a month and a half of your salary is the standard. What you get for this is working space with desk and phone, access to a pot of coffee, the use of a clerical staff and various office equipment and a pitiful excuse for a library. You share in the services of a receptionist who answers the phone by saying "executive offices" and takes any messages you're lucky enough to get. For what it's worth, you get the advice and the pep talks of your assigned counselor.

You can go to outplacement every day or every other day, once a week or once a month. It depends on how determined you are, or how futile the whole thing has started to seem. If nothing else, outplacement can give you a reason to put on a white shirt and tie and get into your car in the morning. You are saved from never getting out of your pajamas, from slowly descending into a vegetative state.

The counselors will tell you that if you're serious about getting out of Purgatory, you're going to have to telephone everybody you know—and a great many people you don't.

"Mr. Johnson? Mr. Johnson, my name is Jerry Meyer. I'm the vice president of communications at the J. I. Case Company here in Wisconsin. Joe Smith at Consolidated Amalgamated gave me your name. About a week ago I sent you a letter that I hope has reached you by now. As my letter indicated, I've reached a point in my career where I'm interested in exploring some new options, and I'm wondering if you've heard of any searches it might be worthwhile for me to check out."

Dave, who used to be the head of security at J. I. Case and has become my best friend in outplacement, somehow got a copy of a directory of all the corporate security chiefs in America. Every day, hour after hour, he goes through it page by page, entry by entry, dialing and talking, dialing and talking, gradually accumulating leads like a prospector panning for gold. So far, his leads have not led to a single interview. The problem, I guess, is that he's well past fifty. But he never gives up, and although he makes a lot of sour jokes, he never complains. He never even slows down.

In outplacement, if you know what's good for you, you force yourself to be as much like Dave as you can. You listen attentively to the counselors as they tell miracle stories about people just like you who wrote and wrote and called and called and got absolutely nowhere until one day—wonder of wonders—the job of their dreams fell swooning into their arms. Above all, you force yourself to dig deeper and deeper into the directories and dredge up more and more names. There are hundreds of headhunter firms in the U.S. today, many thousands of individual headhunters. And one of the rules of outplacement is that if you haven't sent your résumé to some particular headhunter within the past six months, it's time to do so again. If you send out a thousand résumés in June and are still out of work in December, do it again. There's enough work in this to keep anybody busy for a lifetime. As for whether it actually makes sense, is actually going to pay off . . . well, what else are you going to do?

IF NOTHING ELSE, OUTPLACEMENT GIVES YOU AN EXCUSE TO PUT ON A WHITE SHIRT

So you pick up that phone and you force yourself to make those calls. But unless you're luckier than most or the job market gets a lot better, you'll discover that it's possible to send off five hundred résumés with five hundred customized cover letters and not get a single reply more substantial than a preprinted postcard saying thanks.

You'll learn that after a while it can become very hard to think of new people to call, harder still to call for the third or the fourth time. You'll find that gradually some of your fellow deceased aren't showing up very often anymore. Some will drift away completely, and you'll remember their dark jokes about becoming a security guard or moving north to where somebody's son-in-law knows about a job driving a delivery truck. You'll wonder what happened to them but won't really want to find out.

You'll see how every week a little more confidence has been drained from the eyes of the people who keep coming back, so that after a while they look as if they're afraid of life. You'll reflect that exactly the same change must be taking place in your own eyes. You'll

want to stay home and never get out of your pajamas. But you won't dare.

Václav Havel writes that modern society is held together by fear—fear of loss, mostly; so we accumulate more and more things with which to assure ourselves that it isn't necessary to be afraid and that our compromises haven't been for nothing. It is fear, Havel believes, that drives us to accept corruption and dishonesty, to pretend we are what we aren't.

Ultimately, having given away almost everything that matters, we end up defining ourselves by our possessions. Gradually we become incapable of imagining goals higher or more meaningful than a fine house or a fine car. We abandon hope without even realizing we've done so.

I have friends who wear gold Rolexes and cashmere sports coats, but when you get to know them it turns out that they regard their own lives as misbegotten messes of fear and greed and disappointment. It's no wonder that so many of them—people with summer houses and BMWs—turn out to be quietly desperate for retirement. I think they see retirement as their last chance to go back to being the people they were when they were starting out, back to being themselves. Too often, though, by the time they reach retirement they're so hollowed out they no longer remember who they once were. Their idea of fulfillment has come down to six days of golf a week.

I WAKE EACH DAY KNOWING NO ONE IS EXPECTING ME ANYWHERE

WINTER

A friend told me today that he's, without any job prospects at all and is putting his house on the market. This is a man whose résumé is cast in gold. He's been executive vice president at two multibillion-dollar corporations, and he's still under fifty. He has an engineering degree and an M.B.A., is a graduate of the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School, and has no disabilities or flaws that I could detect in two years of working closely with him. He's been out of work for more than a year now, and he reports that his prospects seem to be narrowing with every passing month. In the absence of any job opportunities, in the absence of anything to do at all, he's been looking at the possibility of buying some small company somewhere. Each new company he looks at, he says, is smaller than the last.

"Where's it going to end?" he asks, laughing. "With me running a McDonald's?"

Well, maybe.

I look at every week's fresh crop of Wonderful Franchising Opportunity ads in the *Wall Street Journal*, but I never see anything that makes me want to bet the farm. Most of them involve fast-food places, quickie oil-change joints, and printing and duplicating services. Many of them appeal explicitly to displaced executives: "Frustrated?" "Looking for a good place to land with your golden parachute?"

Like a lot of Americans, I know people who bought McDonald's franchises early and got very rich. But I know also that hundreds of people have lost their shirts on such things. Among all the new franchise ideas now being pitched across America, I'm certain that one or two are going to make a lot of money for a few shrewd or lucky plungers. I'm equally sure that I have less chance of picking the winner than I'd have of finding the pea in a sidewalk shell game.

But the idea persists, makes sense suddenly: if nobody will give you a job, buy yourself one.

I've started checking out Mail Boxes Etc. For an investment of about a hundred grand you can open a shop where people bring things to be packed and shipped. While you've got them there you can sell them ballpoint pens, greeting cards, money orders, the use of your copying machine. It's one of the fastest-growing franchise operations in the country.

Pam hates the idea. I ask if she has a better one. Whenever the subject comes up, both of us get hot. The local Mail Boxes rep gives me a list of nearby franchisees, and I start using my Saturdays to drive from shop to shop and talk with the owners.

In downtown Evanston, a block from Northwestern University, I meet a woman whose shop is obviously doing well. But the location is exceptional: a big residential university, a high-income suburb, a booming business district. All the locations this good were grabbed up years ago.

In Wheaton, a friendly, big-bellied man tells me that, yes, it definitely is possible to make a good living out of a Mail Boxes store. Eventually. If you're willing to work hard and operate in the red for quite a while. "Of course, if you're expecting to make thirty or forty thousand a year," he says with a smile, "that may be a very different matter."

In a strip mall in a raw new suburb I come upon a Mail Boxes owned and operated by a thin, bald man who looks harried despite the emptiness of his establishment. When I tell him what I want, he takes me behind the

counter, offers me a chair, seats himself at his desk. He tells me how he was outplaced by the corporation where he'd been employed as an accountant, failed to find another job, and with great difficulty persuaded his wife that they should take their accumulated retirement money and buy him a job.

I ask him if two years sounds like a realistic estimate of how long I'd have to wait to be able to support myself in this, and the man bursts into tears, actually begins to sob. He pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and starts mopping at his eyes.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I'm sorry. I'll be all right in a minute."

Before entering the corporate world, I had many jobs in many fields: naval officer, newspaper reporter, public relations consultant. Looking back, none of these was better than the one in which I was a "blubberer," scraping sealskins for a fur company in Alaska. Physically, this was the hardest work I've ever done, bloody and greasy and foul. Five hours of it would exhaust the best of us. And it required living for months on a barren island where the sun literally never broke through the clouds, a place without stores, movies, television, beer, girls, or even a record player.

What was wonderful about the Alaska job I can see only in retrospect: it had no bullshit. No politics, no pretense of any kind. Our job was to finish all the skins on hand as quickly as we could without damaging them in the process. When skins came in we worked like brutes, pushing dull knives through resistant tissue until our hands bled. But when we were finished nobody expected us to hang around pretending to be working or pretending to be eager for more.

In my first ten or so years of adulthood, through graduate school and the Navy and Vietnam and my first adult, civilian jobs, I got accustomed to wearing a necktie and to *being* something rather than simply doing something for pay. But through it all I daydreamed about getting free. Until I was well into my thirties I almost always thought of my jobs as interruptions, intrusions into the parts of life in which I could come closest to being me.

But gradually, by thousands of steps each as insignificant as the twitch of a second hand, we get broken in. By infinitesimal stages we change from rebellious colts to seasoned, stolid wheelhorses. Somehow we come not merely to accept the harness but to need it. To be deeply uneasy, even deeply afraid, without it.

Considering how little I've enjoyed or been satisfied by many of the jobs I've had, it is increasingly strange to me that I now find it so painful to awaken every morning to the realization that I have no work to go to; that no one is expecting me anywhere. I think of this before I open my eyes, and the thought always comes as a sharp stab. Back when I was a colt, shying at the halter and kicking at the traces, I couldn't have imagined all this freedom hurting as much as it does.

At times I've said, in talking with friends, that maybe I'm never going to find another corporate job. I always say next, in what I hope is a cavalier tone, that if that's how things work out it won't really matter much. But until recently this was just bluster. I didn't mean it, didn't really believe that anything of the kind could happen. Now I believe. Now it looks not only possible but likely. And I do think it matters.



Several of the friends I value most have told me that they hope I never go back into a corporation. Write, they advise, teach. I invariably reply that I'll probably end up doing something like what they suggest. But before making a final decision, I add, I owe it to myself to look carefully at all the options. I need to look into the corporate possibilities too, I

say, because that's the responsible thing to do.

After some experimentation I settle on the word "responsible" as particularly good in this context. It seems to suggest that although I am, of course, rich in options, and although, of course, I know the right thing for me would be a spot in academia or in the world of authors (someplace where I would be free not only to share my wisdom with the human race but to do so in sneakers and a sweatshirt), I also need to remember my obligations to wife and children and all that.

Declining to suggest these things would involve an admission that I have at present no options at all, that as a matter of hard fact I would grab the first really solid job opportunity that came along, regardless of whether it was back in the defense business or back in the agency business or at East Jesus Community College. But I don't seem to be capable of that kind of truthfulness. I can't admit how naked I feel and how helpless, can't admit that if anyone gave me one more shot at the fat-cat world I'd snatch at it like a hungry beggar snatching at a dollar bill.

I make a file for every job lead that comes my way. Each contains a thin stack of pages: ads clipped from newspapers, formal job descriptions when I can get them, brief handwritten records of phone conversations, copies of letters sent to headhunters, and their replies, if any. In the early weeks of my search, as the files accumulated, I lined them up in a row on a coffee table in the bedroom, overlapping them, so that the names formed a column.

Early on it was a pretty impressive display: Philip Morris, Digital Equipment Corp., Holiday Inn, Rhone-Poulenc, Ameritech, Gerber, Imcera Group, Union Carbide. Big, rich corporations. It seemed hard to believe then that at least one of these wouldn't lead to an offer of some kind.

SINCE JUNE, I'VE BEEN CAREFULLY MISLEADING MY PARENTS

Since then my little display has withered as completely as the leaves of summer. Gradually, as I've been told or have figured out for myself that I'm not in contention for this or that job, I've moved my files to a cardboard box in the basement. I call the box my department of dead letters.

Since then I've been answering ads that describe jobs for which I am—or so I honestly believe—ridiculously overqualified. My active-leads file now is, consequently, as fat as it's ever been. But with jobs I would have sneered at in June, July, or August.

In the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, I found an ad for a communications manager of something called the National Fertilizer Solutions Association. I actually have an interview for this one. If nothing else, it's a good excuse to run down to St. Louis and see my parents. I've been hoping all along that I could land a job before I would be forced to tell them that I'm unemployable.

. I also have a file on a magazine-editing job with the American Bar Association; on an unnamed corporation that ran an ad for a public relations director ("Blind," I've labeled this one, since I haven't even been able to find out what company it is); on three public relations agencies trying to fill jobs conspicuously less exalted than the agency job I left sixteen years ago; on a job with a company that appears to be in the natural gas business in some way that its ad doesn't quite make clear in a place called Dublin, Ohio; on a Washington-based association called the N.R.E.C.A. (I answered the ad without taking the trouble to find out what the acronym means—solid proof of the intensity of my interest); on Boston College, which ran an ad for a director of public relations; on the Columbia University Press, which is looking for a sales representative to cover, by automobile, at an annual salary of less than $30,000, a region extending from Illinois to Texas.

One of my motives in answering such ads is to get a better sense of what kind of response will get me an offer of an interview and what won't. The answer, so far, seems to be that almost nothing I do leads to an interview.

When I complain about not getting answers when I respond to ads of this kind, Pam says I'm being ridiculous. People are simply not going to look seriously at someone so obviously overqualified, she says. She's right, I'm sure. But then again, what am I supposed to do? Sit here waiting for someone to call about a job that is "worthy" of me? I could wait forever. Literally. I could become the modern equivalent of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*, sitting here year after year watching a canopy of cobwebs form over my telephone.

The first thing I do when I get to St. Louis is take a big sweeping detour out to Kirkwood, the suburb where Pam and I lived for twenty years. Somebody whose name I don't know has painted my front door and shutters a new color. It looks good. I hate it.

When I get to my parents' house, it is my mother, as always, who comes to the door. My

father, as usual, stays in his chair in front of the television. He's just finished a course of radiation therapy. Now in their eighties, the two of them are so frail they seem to have been constructed from rolls of parchment.

I've decided that I have to tell them. Otherwise, I'm afraid, they'll hear about it through the family grapevine. However they hear it, the news is going to frighten them. These are two people whose early lives were badly twisted by the Depression. Their little house was paid off decades ago, they're collecting Social Security and a post office pension plus a monthly pittance from the Teamsters, and by any measure they appear to have come through safely after all. But I feel certain that news of what's happened to me is going to be a blow to an inner place where old wounds have never healed. Better that they hear it from me, with whatever reassurances I can offer, than in the course of idle conversation with a cousin.

Since June I've been carefully misleading them, calling every week or two as usual but pretending that I'm calling from my office. Occasionally my father, who reads every page of his daily paper with scholarly care and knows much more about the economy than I wish he did, asks how business is. Lately he's been asking every time I call, and recently he sent me a newspaper clipping about the growing financial problems of J. I. Case, the company he thinks I still work for. The article made reference to huge losses and staff cuts. "This is distressing," he wrote across the top in a tremulous hand; so different from the beautiful one I remember.

Half an hour after supper I join my parents in the minuscule room that was once my bedroom, barely big enough now for the three chairs, the sewing machine, and the big Sony television they've arranged against the walls. They're watching a sitcom. I sit down and start leafing through the newspaper.

This house is so small, so dominated by the habits of these two people, that it's like a shell they've grown together. I have trouble remembering how four of us ever lived in it. I sit watching for my chance to deliver a piece of news unlike any I've ever brought here before. On the walls around us are photos. My parents in my father's parents' front yard on their wedding day, the two of them dressed not in white gown and morning coat but as though they were setting off for work in some upscale office. My sister and me, I in my senior year of college with a tight-knotted narrow tie and oiled-down short hair, she in the white cap and high, sprayed-stiff hair of a new nursing-school graduate. My grandmothers and grandfathers, my parents' grandsons and granddaughters. Embroidered slogans in picture frames.

The sitcom ends and my father jabs at his remote control, killing the sound.

"I see in the paper," I say, "that they're laying off fifteen hundred people at Southwestern Bell."

"Yeah," says my father, "and over in Red Bud they're closing some plant where six hundred and fifty people work. Seems like there's something like that happening every day. How are things at your place?"

"Not so good, really. Actually, business is damned bad." We're all silent for a moment, my parents keeping one eye on a silent automobile commercial. "That's something I've been wanting to talk to you about."

They turn toward me big-eyed, frozen, like a couple of deer that have suddenly smelled mountain lion.

"Listen, I've lost my job." Their eyes seem to get bigger. I pause, feeling as if I've just confessed to an axe murder. When nobody falls down dead I go on. I talk for a long time. I go through the problems that brought the J. I. Case Company to the verge of ruin—the decision to keep the assembly lines humming even after sales began to drop, the huge losses rising out of this decision, the unexplained departure of the president, the sudden dismissal of two executive vice presidents, the progressive elimination of more and more jobs and then of whole departments. The addition of my job, finally, to the list of those being eliminated.

MY ACTIVE FILE IS FAT WITH JOBS I WOULD HAVE SNEERED AT LAST JULY OR AUGUST

"I knew something was wrong," says my father. "I sent you that article."

I tell them I'm still drawing my salary, will continue to do so for a good while longer, and won't be financially desperate even if I'm still out of work when the checks stop coming. I tell them things I've never told them before about money. Not a lot but much more than my usual silence on the subject. What I do, mainly, is color in the bright parts of the picture and ignore the dark parts. I say nothing about the sums—sums that even I still find almost unimaginable at times—that flow through our checking account every month, year after year. If I got specific they'd think I must be joking. Or they'd have to lie down with ice bags on their heads.

They appear to be satisfied with what I've said. Their attention drifts back to the televi-

sion. Everything is fine—except that I seem to be just as alone as I was at the beginning of the conversation. My parents know, now, that the wonder boy is unemployed but coping. They've no idea how the wonder boy is feeling, and it's not clear to me that they care.

What was supposed to be an interview with the guy at Fertilizer Solutions Association turns into a two-day visit. The head man, a bright and bluff ex-farmer named Jim Boillot, starts by entertainingly telling me the story of how he went bust in the agricultural crash of the early Eighties, got a political appointment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a while, and finally took the job he has now as a way of getting back to Missouri. It's



clear, though, that he enjoys his work and cares about it. He seems to enjoy talking with me. He also seems to be taking me seriously.

The job I'm a candidate for, unfortunately, is mostly a matter of writing and managing a magazine entirely devoted to the subject of liquid fertilizers. This isn't a dishonorable subject, certainly, and the last few months have definitely deepened my experience of things closely akin to fertilizer. But it does sound faintly ridiculous.

On the first day, Boillot arranges for three of his people to take me out to lunch. One, a man whose main job is selling ads, talks about how he himself recently went through a long and painful search for work.

When I meet with a man whose main responsibility is recruiting new members for the association, I learn that he, too, was laid off earlier in the year by a collapsing soybean association. After this I meet the staff lawyer, another recent arrival, a fiftyish man with photos of his large family on the sill behind his desk. He tells me—I'm amazed by how frank all these people are about their recent catastrophes—how he was an investor in and manager of a string of discount gas stations that went under. I ask, wondering if I have the right to ask, whether he plans to stay with the fertilizer association permanently. Probably not, he says. "Don't get me wrong. It's a good place. Nice people. But it just doesn't pay what I'm going to need in the long term. I took it because at the time I needed a job. Needed a job bad." He smiles when he says this.

I don't tell him I know the feeling. This whole place is a collection of refugees, apparently. We seem to be evolving into a nation of native-born refugees.

At the end of the second day, Boillot takes me back into his office for a final talk. He explains how important the magazine is to his operation. If subscriptions or ad revenues fell off severely the entire association would be crippled. It's essential that the magazine be interesting, that it deliver something of real value to people who make their living in the world of liquid fertilizers. This is very different from some corporate house organ. This is real.

He's sure I could bring talent and good experience to the magazine, Boillot says. He has a concern, though: I've never run a publication of this kind. Could I do it well, and do so from the day I reported for work? He can't afford much of a learning period.

I tell him I think I can do it from the first day, but I don't argue hard. Though I like this man, I know already that if he offers me the job I probably won't accept. Probably shouldn't accept, because almost certainly I'd feel out of place in it and therefore would probably start resenting the cut in pay.

A few mornings later he calls and tells me that he's found a candidate who has spent years running a magazine almost exactly like the fertilizer association's. "I just don't think I can justify not hiring him," he says. I agree effusively and thank him again. He asks me to let him know wherever I go in my next job, and I promise to do so. When I hang up it's with a feeling of relief; not getting an offer means I won't have to agonize over whether to take a

job that obviously would be wrong for everyone involved, won't have to turn this good man down after taking up two days of his time.

Funny to be turned down and feel so good about it. Funny how the two days I spent with Boillot and his people feel like time well spent.

I nearly went to law school once. I took the LSAT, took a couple of political science courses to get myself ready, found the courses uninteresting but still wrote to law schools for application forms. I didn't really want to do it, though, and in later years when I had the opportunity to witness lawyers at work I wasn't sorry not to be doing what they were.

Yet if I had gone through with it, I might have a secure practice no one could take from me now.

I didn't go to law school because I won a fellowship for graduate work in English. I went off to spend a year getting an M.A. because it sounded like more fun than going to work or to law school and because it was a chance to find out whether academia was the place for me (I quickly decided it wasn't). Then, coming out of grad school, I joined the Navy to avoid the draft. That led to Officer Candidate School, a year and a half on a destroyer patrolling the coast of Vietnam, and a final, screamingly pointless year at a Navy supply depot in southern California.

My first job after the Navy was a vague one—my title was "administrative editor," reflecting the fact that I wasn't quite an administrator and wasn't quite an editor—with Meredith Publishing Company in Des Moines. Meredith was a gigantic outfit, producing a zillion copies a month of *Better Homes and Gardens*, nearly that many copies of *Successful Farming*, and profitable lines of cookbooks and do-it-yourself books and other forms of printed retail merchandise.

I had a cubicle deep inside the company's massive old brickwork headquarters and very little to do. This was especially maddening because I regarded myself, out of school and out of uniform at last, to be on the threshold of a career. I wanted to get started. I wanted to do things. Being hired and then left so idle felt like a betrayal.

Everybody at Meredith was bored half insane, and gradually I learned to separate my associates into two groups. One, by far the largest, was made up of earnest sorts determined to stay in the role of the serious executive under all circumstances; they had as little to do as any of us but insistently pretended to be constantly challenged. It was easy to identify these people: I'd make a glancing, joking reference to the tedium of the place, and they were the ones who gave back a blank stare lightly flecked with annoyance.

Gradually, here and there, I made the acquaintance of a small number of people who saw the place the way I did and were willing, whenever it was minimally safe, to say so. Eventually a few of us formed a kind of secret cell that would meet every morning and afternoon in a remote and cavernous area far down in the lowest level of the building, a dark void where enormous room-size rolls of paper were stacked in great brown palisades. Deep within it, strangely, under a naked lightbulb, we found a soda machine and a picnic table with chairs. Nobody ever seemed to use them but us. Sometimes we'd stay there for hours, joking about what was happening or not happening above ground in Officeland, talking about movies and books and whatnot. Nobody ever seemed to miss us.

We all quit within a year. I was the first to go, and I departed on the assumption that I'd simply been extraordinarily unlucky in my first grown-up job. I assumed that Meredith had to be an aberration, that wherever I went I was bound to find more to do and more interesting things to do and people who didn't have to stupefy themselves to keep coming back every day. And on the whole I did find things better elsewhere. Not as much better as I had hoped but better. On the whole I found what working men and women have been finding for more than a century now: that big bureaucracies are a form of death in life wherever you find them, whether they belong to some corporation or to some branch of the government.

MY CREDENTIALS GROW JUST A LITTLE STALER WITH EACH PASSING MONTH

The same part of me that wishes it had gone to law school wishes it had stayed at Meredith. The part that was for so many years proud of having said to hell with law school, to hell with Meredith, is now trembling in a corner, curled up with its hands over its head.

SPRING

The first of the mallards and Canada geese have made their appearance in Wisconsin. I have fewer job prospects than I had last summer. A birthday has passed, so that I'm now one year older and have that much less value on the executive meat market. My professional credentials grow just a little staler with every passing month.

I could go to truck-driver school and learn to operate one of those huge tractor-trailer

rigs. I could pull vast loads from coast to coast and back again. Maybe buy my own diesel eventually.

Or maybe my neighbor Jim would give me a job in the little air-filter factory he runs. He's constantly complaining about how impossible it is to find minimally competent and dependable people. I'm minimally competent. A year's take-home pay probably wouldn't cover a lot more than the taxes on my house, but it would be better than no job at all. And it could make me a local legend: the former briefcase carrier who spent the last twenty years of his life inserting tab A into slot B seventeen times a minute, forty hours a week.

MAYBE MY NEIGHBOR JIM WILL GIVE ME A JOB IN HIS AIR-FILTER FACTORY

For that matter, I could try standing behind the counter at McDonald's or Burger King or Kentucky Fried Chicken. I would wear a little paper hat and dread the thought of having to wait on somebody who knew me when.

In another daydream I simply stop looking for work, stop having my hair cut, stop going anywhere or doing anything that could possibly involve the unnecessary expenditure of fifty cents. I never buy a new piece of clothing, never again own a car, turn my yard into a vegetable garden and my kitchen into a canning factory. Slowly I evolve into the crazy old man of Racine, Wisconsin, as my house falls in around my ears. And when I'm truly old and the last of my money is gone, I use a real-looking toy pistol and enter upon a career of armed robbery. If I'm caught, no tragedy: I'll be put in a place where there's a warm, dry bed and free food every day.

An Iowa company called Pioneer Hi-Bred International, the world's leading producer of seed corn and such, is looking for someone more or less like me. In the Chicago office of the company's headhunter, Greg Carrott, I present the usual highly sanitized and vastly edifying version of my life story, a story in which someone with my name is constantly and purposefully pressing forward from challenge to challenge and triumph to triumph. Carrott in turn tells me the usual things about how his clients are looking for a team player and a real strategist and all the things that all the companies say. It's like performing a ritual folk dance—something choreographed by somebody whose name everybody forgot long, long ago.

My time at J. I. Case has made me, luckily, a certified veteran of the agriculture business. Case isn't a seed company, but it builds farm machinery. That's close enough to separate me from the city slickers, evidently. It also seems to help that I once lived in Des Moines, where Pioneer has its headquarters. As I'm leaving his office Carrott says casually that the fit between me and this job seems "almost too good to be true." The words seem momentous, written on the sky. Inside me the gray coals of hope turn orange.

Soon I get word that Pioneer is sending a delegation of three people to Chicago to meet with me. Carrott says that I'm the candidate with the broadest background and the most impressive experience. Again his words spread out against the sky. Little flames begin to dance on the glowing coals of hope.

It's been obvious from the start that if I get this job it won't exactly enhance my résumé. It carries the title of director, no small step down from the high plains where I've been feeding these past ten years. I don't much care about this, but there's no denying that it would be a further blotch on my already tarnished job history. What's far worse is that my willingness to consider it could easily prove a problem for Pioneer itself. Corporations and their headhunters are inclined to be suspicious of anyone willing to descend. Even today, amidst the layoffs and the downsizing and unprecedented executive unemployment, they persist in wondering what's wrong with somebody willing to take a downward step. Though little has been said about salary, I'd probably have to move lower on that ladder too. Again I'm perfectly willing, but they're likely to wonder why.

While I collect information about Pioneer, other jobs start popping to the surface. Résumés mailed out months ago suddenly bear fruit. A headhunter calls from New York and asks if I might be interested in looking into the vacant vice presidency of an insurance company called The Principal Financial Group.

I read in a newsletter that the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Washington-based policy arm of the Catholic Church in America, is looking for a director of media relations. As it happens, I am the kind of Catholic who takes an interest in religious issues. Handling media relations for the U.S. Catholic Conference could, for someone like me, be interesting. I imagine myself working in a cubicle instead of an office, wearing a checked shirt and hush puppies to work, shedding my "executive" identity like a snakeskin. I put a résumé in the mail.

A headhunter calls from Connecticut to say he's looking for a head of communications for

Consolidated Edison, New York City's electric utility. Not long afterward, when his travels bring him to Chicago, we have a breakfast meeting. Then his partner passes through Chicago, and I have breakfast with him too. Both men convey the impression that before long I'm likely to be invited to meet with Con Ed's CEO in Manhattan.

So many things popping up suddenly, and every one of them apparently a real possibility. All of them together creating a tangled web of questions.

The Des Moines–based Principal Financial Group is, like Pioneer, a relatively obscure operation, attracting little if any attention in the world at large. And it's an insurance company. A friend who has done a good deal of work with insurance companies says that the operative term for virtually all of them is "brain-dead."

But The Principal (I quickly school myself to capitalize the article in the reverential style used in all the company's publications) is strong and healthy and old-fashioned. Once hired, I'm told, people there are never fired. That's nothing to sneer at. And it's reasonable to hope that the soporific qualities of Des Moines might be exactly what my family needs after the turmoil of these past several years.

No doubt about it. Pioneer and The Principal are exactly what I've been looking for.

But if that's so, how can I be genuinely interested in Con Ed? Its headquarters aren't merely in New York but in Manhattan—the heart of the heart of the beast. And Con Ed, as a utility, would embroil me in an endless round of conflicts and controversies: electricity rates, pollution, the whole extravaganza. All in the center of the wildest media circus on earth.

How could someone who hungers for Iowa also hunger for that?

Without a trace of difficulty, actually. Con Ed could put me back in the big time—big salary, big staff, big budgets, big everything.

I always liked being in the big time. I have no problem persuading myself that Con Ed is exactly what I've been looking for.

But if Con Ed is exactly what I've been looking for, how could I possibly be interested in the U.S. Catholic Conference?

Again, no problem. The U.S. Catholic Conference could, I think, offer me work that I really would find worth doing. No corporation has ever really done that. In return, of course, I would receive an income that I no longer know how to live on.

But I can learn! I can accept the idea of never again ordering a custom-made suit, of maybe never again buying a suit of any kind. I can imagine myself commuting to work by bicycle, never taking a vacation more exotic than fishing in the Smokies.

I can do that! If what I get in return is liberation from bullshit, I ought to be able to do it quite happily.

On a small piece of paper I make a list:

Pioneer.

U.S. Catholic Conference.

Principal Financial Group.

Con Ed.

And—my newest nibble—Dun & Bradstreet.

I pin the list to the bulletin board above my desk. My eyes come to rest on it whenever I look up.

I meditate on my little list. I tell myself that I couldn't possibly lose out on all of these. Couldn't possibly. Not on all of them.

When the time comes for my meeting with the delegation from Pioneer I am tan and fit and brimming with facts about corn.

They've seated me on one side of a long, narrow table in a brilliantly white modern room twenty-five stories above the Chicago Loop. It's a corner room, two of the walls glass from ceiling to floor. Across the table, past the people sitting opposite, I see one of the world's great displays of skyscrapers. Out another window, Lake Michigan extends to the horizon in the sunshine.

Everything here—the plush furnishings and gleaming appointments, the tall wooden doors, the chimney-like thick-bottomed water glasses, the silver decanter—everything is expensive, elegant. Everything says Money. Power.

At the table with me are Greg Carrott and three delegates from Pioneer. One is a silver-haired, seemingly mild and friendly man—a specialist in finance, a senior vice president, the eminence to whom the new director of communications will, once hired, report. At his side is a dark, attractive woman, also seemingly pleasant, of early middle age. I'm not sure what her role is; she has some vague administrative title that I couldn't have repeated ten seconds after we were introduced. The third, on my side of the table, but far down at its end, is another woman who seems not part of the team, hunched, odd, silent.

HEADHUNTERS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF ANYONE WILLING TO DESCEND

The first two Pioneer people lob easy ques-



tions at me. I seem to hit them back cleanly one by one. They ask about my background, my business experience, my thinking on management and communications and all the usual stuff. They probe in gentle, Iowa-polite ways to see if I know anything about agriculture. They ask what I would do if confronted with this or that kind of little problem. Am I a team player? What are my thoughts on corporate cultural change?

For nearly an hour the woman at the end of the table has said nothing. She's plump, with dumpling chins and the arms of the Pillsbury Doughboy. Her dress, a gray-and-white affair extravagantly adorned with laces and ribbons and frills, combines with her spherical, soft



flesh to create a maternal, almost grandmotherly, effect. Except for her crew cut. Her graying hair is cut down nearly to the scalp on the sides of her head and is, at most, an inch long at the top. This is a woman whose parts don't fit together.

Carrott had told me days before that one of the people I'd be meeting would be a former clinical psychologist now on Pioneer's human resources staff. He'd gone on to say that I might find her questions "unusual."

While answering the others' questions, I glance at the woman from time to time, trying to include her. But every time I do so she's a little more hunched over in her chair, staring at me a little more intently. Eventually she's bent over so far that if I hadn't seen her standing when I entered the room I'd suppose her to be deformed. Her chins are nearly touching the table. The end of the ballpoint pen she grips so ferociously is nearly in her nostril. Her stare has become a glare.

It's difficult to believe that someone as peculiar as she appears to be could be a psychologist, let alone be sent out on presumably important interviews. Perhaps I'm being subjected to some sort of test.

But even if this is a test, should I do exactly what I am doing—continue with the interview as if nothing odd were going on at all? Or will they decide that there's something wrong with me if I don't seem aware of the behavior of the woman at the end of the table?

I shove all such thoughts aside and try to fix my attention on the questions I'm being asked. It won't stay there, though.

As we get into the second hour of the interview the crew-cut woman straightens a bit and asks a question at last. And immediately a new problem arises: I don't understand what she's asking. I can hear her words, but they're so convoluted that I literally have almost no idea what they mean. I apologize, tentatively feed her words back to her in a new sequence that makes some sense to me, and ask as politely as I can if this is what she means. When she assents to my second or third rephrasing, I spin off some words that seem to be relevant in some way to whatever it is she wants to know.

"Is that responsive to your question?" I ask. She gives a grudging little nod. Then she hunches down again, makes some notes, puts her glare back on me, and the others resume.

This happens again and then again. Each time the woman speaks, she stumps me. I go back to wondering about a test. I wonder if perhaps I'm flunking badly by not pinning her down, by not being more insistent—with impeccable delicacy, of course—that she make herself clear. But I honestly am trying to get her to be clear. I can see no way to go further in that direction without crossing the borders of rudeness.

Perhaps an hour and twenty minutes after the start of the interview, the man and woman across the table start gathering their papers together. Their words take on the old wrapping-things-up tone. In the midst of this, the crew-cut woman uncoils herself, sits erect with her hands folded on the table in front of her, and takes command.

"Let me ask you something," she says. "Sup-

pose you have just come to work for Pioneer. And suppose we're the members of your staff and this meeting was our first staff meeting. What exactly would you have concluded about us on the basis of what you've seen?"

Jesus H. Christ.

"Um," I reply. "Let me be certain that I understand you here. You want me to tell you what I think of you. On the basis of this interview . . ."

"That's right. Judging from what you've seen, what do you think you'd have to do to manage us?"

"Well," I say finally, "on the basis of one short talk I don't think I can draw many conclusions about you at all. Nothing beyond the fact that you appear to be intelligent, well-intentioned, capable people. I certainly haven't seen anything that would give rise to particular concerns. Nothing, certainly, that would point to serious problems."

"Well then," she says, "let me ask you about me specifically, then. What would you say, on the basis of what you've seen here today, about me? And about what would be involved in managing me?"

"Let me be sure I'm clear on this," I say, stalling. "You want me to tell you what I think of you specifically as a result of this afternoon's meeting."

"That's right." She nods with satisfaction. Again I remember that she's a psychologist of some kind. I don't know what to do with that fact, exactly. But it seems to increase the likelihood that some sort of game—not necessarily a deep game but a complicated one for sure—is being played here.

"Wellll . . . I guess I would say, on the basis of what I've seen, that you strike me as a very analytical kind of person."

Analytical! Good word! How did I come up with it? As soon as it's out of my mouth I'm delighted. I don't know myself what it means in this context—nearly anything, potentially—but I don't see how anyone could possibly object to being called analytical.

"What does your conclusion suggest to you about me in relation to the others?" she asks and gestures at the man and woman on the other side of the table. They gaze back at us blankly. "What does it suggest about how you might manage my relationship with them?"

Enough. Enough of this crazy woman.

"My conclusion doesn't suggest anything about that," I say. "I haven't seen nearly enough to get any ideas about how to manage your relationships, even assuming that my conclusion is correct, which it isn't, necessarily. I'm sorry. I just don't judge people that quickly."

An hour later, replaying the interview in my head, I feel myself going glum. What I need is to find a dark place where I can lie down and suck my thumb for a while. After a few more hours depression gives way to resentment, resentment to anger: What kind of interview was that? What kind of people would put me through such a thing? What the hell kind of company would send out such people on such a mission? Who could possibly want to work for such a company?

Before long Greg Carrott calls to tell me that of the four people interviewed, three, including me, had done well—had in fact been described by the silver-haired senior vice president as "a Mercedes, a BMW, and a Cadillac." I don't have the nerve to ask which of these is me. I do, however, want to see if I can learn something about the fat woman with the crew cut. I want to know if it's necessary to keep worrying about her.

"That was an unusual interview," I say. "That one woman, the one who sat off by herself . . . was she trying to throw me off stride? Was she playing some sort of . . . game? Testing my reactions, maybe?"

Carrott speaks slowly in responding, choosing his words. "No. Not really. I guess I really don't know what to say about her. I do think she means well . . ."

So. Nothing more complicated than a strange person being allowed to play a disruptive, destructive part in an interview that was—for me, anyway—hugely serious.

The end comes with merciful speed but otherwise is not surprising. Pioneer doesn't hire me or any of the others interviewed that day high above Lake Michigan. They also don't give the job to an insider. Somewhere and very quickly they find a new candidate who satisfies their expectations, whatever these may be, and hire her.

THE FIRM HAS SELECTED SIX FINALISTS. I'M NOT ONE OF THEM

Fair enough. My biggest regret is that I didn't drop out the afternoon of my interview.

Within days of getting the word from Pioneer I receive a letter from the U.S. Catholic Conference. They've selected six finalists to be interviewed, and I'm not one of them. Apparently there are plenty of Catholics out there who have good media-relations credentials, are hungry for low-paying work, and can do a better job than I can with questions about Church issues. Fair enough.

One of the headhunters for Consolidated

Edison calls to tell me that I'm no longer in contention there. Con Ed's CEO has instructed him, he says, to find black candidates exclusively. If this is true, and not some newly coined, useful excuse, fair enough. If blacks are getting a few extra breaks in the job market these days, I have no complaint.

HOW DESPERATELY I WANT THESE PEOPLE TO BE IMPRESSED BY ME

I'm also out of the running at Dun & Bradstreet. Again the reason is a "secret": the CEO has decreed that the job must go to a woman. Again, if true, that's fine with me. If women are being given an extra advantage here and there, that hardly seems an injustice after all the generations when they were given nothing at all.

Of all the companies on the list above my desk, the list that couldn't conceivably fail to generate a job offer, I am now down to a single possibility: The Principal Financial Group.

The Principal's headhunter, a New Yorker named Jim Wills, passed through Chicago and met with me over dinner. He said he was looking at scores of candidates and hoped to give the company a list of about half a dozen names representing a spectrum of different backgrounds and skills. In the next month he called to say that I had been promoted from his shortlist to the company's.

The month after that two of the company's executives flew out from Des Moines and spent four hours questioning me. They seemed to be decent sorts—Iowa-wholesome again, and Iowa-cautious. I didn't learn much from or about them in the course of our talk, and I didn't see how they could have learned much about me. I was grateful, though, that they didn't bring any psychologists.

A month later I'm scheduled for a two-day visit to Des Moines that will include a meeting with the CEO. The company sends me tickets that will put me on an early-morning flight from O'Hare. On the day before the start of my trip, I go for an especially long jog so that I'll be especially relaxed when it's time to sleep. Before ten that night I drink a cup of warm milk, get into bed, open the less-than-fascinating new biography of Woodrow Wilson that's been my bedtime reading for weeks now, and wait for the nodding-off to start as usual after a few pages.

Before the first nod, though, Pam comes running up the stairs. According to the television a freakish spring blizzard has struck to the south of us in Illinois. O'Hare is in chaos—flights canceled, people stranded by the hundreds. I leap out of bed. It takes me an hour of waiting on the phone to find out that the departure time for my flight has already been postponed indefinitely, with cancellation possible. In another half hour I have a new reservation on a flight out of Milwaukee and have managed to reach my designated contact at The Principal and tell him of the change. By the time I go back to bed every part of my nervous system is on red alert. I try to lose myself in Woodrow Wilson but can't think about anything except the blizzard and whether I'm going to be able to get out of Milwaukee in the morning and how in the hell I'm going to cope with a full day of interviews if I don't get to sleep soon.

I turn out the light, try to fall asleep, realize after a while that it isn't going to happen. Eventually, I creep to the bathroom and surreptitiously, embarrassedly, sneak one of the little (and now rather old) red-and-white sleeping pills that a doctor once prescribed for jet lag. This is the first sleeping pill of my life; I don't know how they work and don't want to ask because I don't want a debate. An hour later, still no closer to sleep and more desperate than ever, I take a second pill. Not long after that I am sound asleep. When the alarm goes off very early in the morning the skies over Wisconsin are clear. I reach the Milwaukee airport with time to spare, my flight takes off on schedule, and I arrive in Des Moines without difficulty.

There is a problem, though: the person who has arrived in Des Moines doesn't seem to be me. My mind, my perceptions, my whole system seem to be—I'm not even sure what word to use—refracted, perhaps. Everything has been thrown slightly but disorientingly off center. It's not that I feel bad really. I simply don't feel that I'm here somehow. I don't feel connected in the usual way to the things I'm experiencing. My experiences don't seem to be mine.

Hour after hour that day I'm led from office to office, from meeting to meeting, and none of it ever feels entirely real. I seem to be able to move and smile and answer and ask questions in a solidly normal way, but as each meeting ends, I have alarmingly little memory of what's just been said. It's the same that night, when an executive vice president takes me to dinner and wants to know all about the day's meetings and what I think about what I've seen. I have to struggle to find things to tell him.

That night I sleep well (without further chemical assistance, needless to say), but though I feel more like myself on Tuesday morning, part of me is still in some fourth or fifth dimension, some distant cosmos where two plus two makes three point eight or four point one.

The next day starts with a long meeting with the CEO. He, too, is curious about yesterday's meetings, and again I try to conceal the trouble I'm having remembering even the names of the people I met. The CEO seems a nice enough man. He also seems dry, narrow, dull. Is it the chemicals that make me think so?

I'm put in a car and taken on a tour of Des Moines. People have been telling me proudly how much the city has grown, how much is going on here. To me, today, despite all my genuinely good memories of the place, it seems the dreariest town of its size I've ever seen. The downtown, which supposedly has been booming for nearly twenty years, looks comatose. The suburbs are exactly how Gertrude Stein would have pictured the suburbs of Des Moines: a flat and barren expanse of mud and clapboard, clapboard and mud. No there there.

When everyone is finished with me, I have hours to kill before my flight. The weather has turned steamy warm, so I set out on a walk. I circle through the downtown area. It's as much a blank from the sidewalk as it had been from the car—nothing of interest, nothing happening, not a single shop I'd like to browse in.

Then, because there doesn't seem to be anything more to look at downtown and it's still too early for the airport, I set out for the neighborhood that years ago everyone regarded as the best in town. South of Grand, it's called; Pam and I and most of our friends thought of it as the place where the upper crust lived. If we were to move to Des Moines now, it's where we would look first for a house. Twenty minutes of fast walking get me there, and when I arrive I see it hasn't changed at all. It's what I remember. But somehow, without changing and without deterioration, it has diminished. It's exactly what I expected and at the same time it disappoints. What comes to mind as I walk the streets on this warm and humid afternoon with plants of every description starting to push up out of the ground, what I keep thinking of is—mildew.

MILDEW? This has to be the chemicals, still messing with my head.

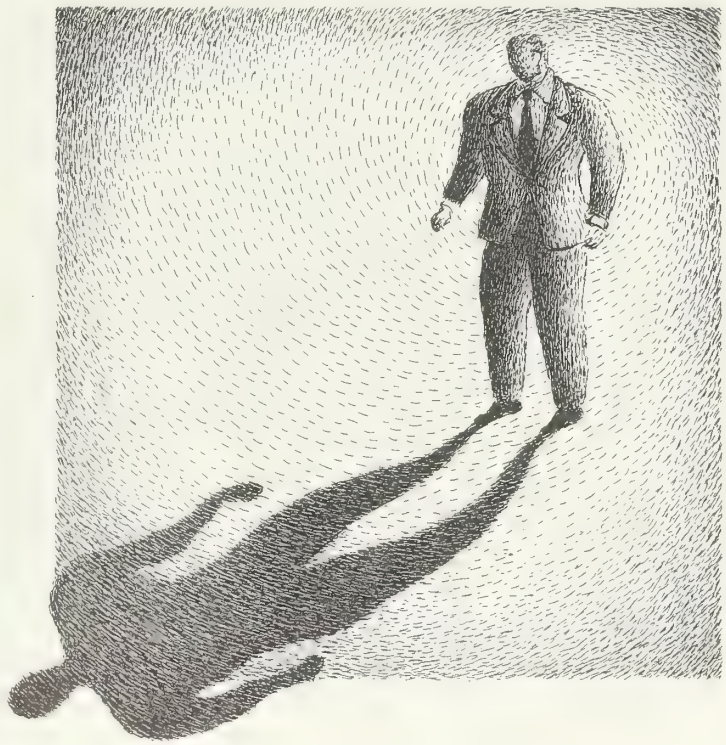
I become aware of how urgently I'm hoping that everything went well—how desperately I want these people to like me, be impressed by me. In a similar situation in a different culture I would sacrifice a ram on the steps of The Principal's headquarters. I would prostrate myself in the spilt blood and pray for deliverance at the foot of what is said to be the tallest building between Chicago and the Coast.

Then, in the midst of all this fervent aspiration, a simple question pops up:

Why?

Why have I got my whole existence centered on this thing?

Because I need a job, obviously. Because if The Principal doesn't offer me a job I'm going to have to keep repeating this process until somebody does. Or until I'm no longer allowed to repeat the process, or have become incapable of doing so. Because I've lost control of my own life and don't know how to get it back except by seducing somebody into hiring me.



But it is clear to me, walking these streets, that I don't want to live here; that I have no real interest in The Principal Financial Group; that I haven't seen a single way in which working there could possibly be interesting, or absorbing, or fun; and that this time it's not the chemicals talking.

On the flight home I compose a letter telling Jim Wills that I no longer want to be considered for the job. By way of explanation I say that even after my two-day visit I still don't understand what the company is looking for. I say further that I can find no way of judging whether I would like the job or would do well in it, or whether, over the long term,

management would be happy with me even if in my own opinion I was doing the job well.

That night I run the letter through my word processor and seal it in an envelope. But in the morning I can't mail it. It's exactly the letter I would send if I were safely in a job instead of being desperately in need of one. But how could I possibly explain to Pam, to my children, to my parents, to the world, that although, as far as I can tell, the interviews in Des Moines went well enough, I've decided to drop out? That although this is a strong and profitable company and its leaders are clearly at least somewhat serious about the possibility of offering me work, and although I don't have a single other live prospect, I've decided to call the discussions off. How could I defend such an act?

After all these months of doing everything possible to find a job and not getting a single offer, after seeing more and more people lose their jobs and have no more luck than I'm having, after growing more and more accustomed to seeing beggars on the streets of every city I visit, I cannot throw this chance away. Even though the job's attractions are mainly the escapes it offers—an escape from fear, from insecurity, from shame—turning my back on it would be pure bravado. And pure bravado, these days, carries a higher price than I can afford to pay.

HUMAN EGGS FERTILIZED THE DAY I WAS FIRED ARE BAWLING BABIES NOW

I tell myself to grow up, that dramatic gestures are for children. That it's still far from clear that they're going to make me an offer. Until they decide, I can continue to look elsewhere. It's not inconceivable that something better will come along very soon. It is merely extremely improbable.

If I'm offered the job and take it and it turns out to be as boring as I expect, well, hell, I've had boring jobs before. That's why they call it work. When I start feeling bored I'll have no trouble remembering how lucky I am to have a job. I'm not good at slogging through day after day of tedium, pretending to care about things that don't interest me, but I've proven that I can do it.

Eventually Wills calls to tell me that among the candidates the company has examined, I'm the sole survivor. However, there is now an inside candidate they want to consider, and that's going to take time. A week later, Wills calls again. He's a little vague, but conveys the impression that I'm still the leading candidate, that the inside candidate has been tested and found wanting. But now another *outside* candidate has emerged. Nothing can happen until this new prospect has been seen and checked out. My mind blossoms with questions, the biggest of which is whether these people are going to keep digging up new candidates until they finally succeed in locating one who doesn't trouble them in the way I, apparently, do.

On a Friday afternoon, after another two or three weeks of silence, Wills calls yet again. The Principal's decision makers have told him they now have everything they need. They intend to make their decision during the week after next.

Ten working days at most. Even if the process runs true to form, I reason, and takes twice as long as predicted, we're still only talking about twenty working days. That's nothing compared with what's already behind me. It's now something like four months since I first had dinner with Wills. Ten months since I started looking for a job. Even twenty more days of only slightly embittered uncertainty are nothing, absolutely nothing, compared with that.

Late on Monday afternoon, at the end of the first day of the week when nothing can possibly happen, I tear a long, narrow strip from the edge of a sheet of yellow legal paper. I tape one end of this strip to the bottom edge of a picture frame across the room from my desk. It hangs there like a ribbon, like some award I've given myself for getting through a whole day of final-phase waiting. On Tuesday afternoon I do the same thing. And on Wednesday. When the week is finally over five shreds of paper hang from my picture frame like a row of military decorations, one for every twenty-four hours of agony endured. It pleases me to look at them. They represent the only kind of achievement that seems to be within my grasp these days.

The next five ribbons come harder.

Ten full months without a job. Human eggs fertilized the day I was fired are bawling babies now. The end of my separation-benefits package is coming into view. I have nothing to hope for but word from The Principal Financial Group.

SUMMER

Everything is green outside when Jim Wills calls to tell me that The Principal has reached its decision. More than six months after starting their search, four months after I was drawn into it, they've decided not to offer the job to anyone. ■

TOXIC DREAMS

A California town finds meaning in an acid pit

By Jack Hitt

The Stringfellow Acid Pits were called into being on August 9, 1955, at a dull meeting of small-bore officials in Riverside County, California. The county's Board of Trade had convened to kick around a new idea, one you still hear among municipal officials in desperate places. The goal was to better facilitate "the program of enticing industries into our county"; the solution, board president Carl Davis said, was for the county to offer a dumping site for the toxic waste that the desired industries would inevitably produce. The board agreed. They approached J. B. Stringfellow, a high school dropout who operated a granite quarry a mile or so outside the little town of Glen Avon. The county's proposal was to dump chemicals into the large stone cavities left by Stringfellow's excavations. The scientific thinking they adopted was: She'll hold.

The county imposed a few restrictions on Stringfellow; they discouraged, for example, any "fuming" liquids. But such burdensome government regulations were quickly forgotten, and the quarry began to fill up with an exquisite ragout, including "scrap thinner," "degreaser," "bonderlube," "paint booth waste," "lube line waste," "sump waste," "paint stripper," "chromated emulsion cleaner," and "paint line waste." One trucker would later testify (for there was, inevitably, a lawsuit) to the careful segregation of deadly chemicals at Stringfellow: If "one pond was full," he said, "we would go up to the next one."

A unique attraction offered by Stringfellow was "unsupervised night dumping." In 1971, local manufacturers received a brochure that read, "If your company finds it necessary to dump on a weekend or during the night, arrangements can be made by telephone with our office." Eventually even the phone call was eliminated, and the gate was simply left unlocked so that truckers could let themselves in at any hour of any day. The oversight system employed to prevent dumping violations was the honor code.

A list of the chemicals poured into Stringfellow fills thirteen pages in a court brief (for there were, inevitably, court briefs), including everything from acetylene chloride, butylated hydroxyanisole, and chlorobenzenesulfonic acid to uranium, xylene, and zinc phosphate. One pits veteran recalled in a deposition how the organics would sometimes get mixed into the acids and that Stringfellow, "as a result, caught fire."

Between September 1956 and November 1972, the quarry took in thirty-four million gallons of chemicals—hundreds of different chemicals—from about a hundred companies. In 1972, Mr. Stringfellow, fearing that the pits were leaking, agreed to shut the dump down. The huge uncovered lagoons languished, unprotected by even a fence.

In March 1978, the rainy season in southern California was worse than usual. With each downpour, the acid pits rose. The state announced that rather than allow the chemical mix to overrun the earthen levees that surrounded it, they were going to flush out some of the pits' contents. Eight hundred thousand gallons of Stringfellow brew were sluiced into the town's open culverts. It curled around the school, burbled past people's homes, and finally sloshed into ditches leading out of town.

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The sewers backed up with an odd viscous foam. Local kids thought the stuff was great; its stickiness made for hilariously goopy bubble beards when they smeared it on their faces.

That August, Love Canal, New York, was evacuated. Poisonous chemicals had been seeping onto playgrounds and into basements. President Carter declared the town a disaster area. "Toxic waste" became a household word. People in Glen Avon, newly conscious of environmental danger, began wondering about the weird foam they had seen, about the strange odors they sometimes smelled, about disabilities and ailments they had previously chalked up to bad luck. Everything, it seemed, could be traced to the same source: the dump.

A group of residents banded together, gave itself a name—Concerned Neighbors in Action—and started asking questions of state environmental officials. As the years passed, and answers were slow in coming, Concerned Neighbors became more activist; in 1980, they printed up a T-shirt with a wilted sunflower, a dying bird, and the slogan IT'S THE PITS. In 1984, state authorities announced the existence of an underground plume of Stringfellow slime, inching toward town. After the news, notices went up around town asking people if they had experienced any peculiar ailments or problems. They had. In April 1985, roughly one third of the town's population joined in filing a massive lawsuit.

ALL OF GLEN AVON'S PROBLEMS, IT SEEMED, COULD BE TRACED TO THE DUMP

The suit's official title was *Penny Newman et al.* v. *J. B. Stringfellow et al.*, but the emphasis, on both sides, was on the "et al." The suit named as defendants J. B. Stringfellow, the state of California, and more than a hundred different dumpers that had used the pits.[1] The plaintiff pool consisted of nearly four thousand injured parties alleging damages that included property devaluation, physical ailment, and emotional distress.

On its surface, then, *Stringfellow* appears to be merely another wretched tale in the familiar genre of dump narratives: negligent corporate giants in cahoots with craven state lackeys secretly store a witches' brew of poisons near working-class town and don't fess up until children are stumping about on withered legs and the elderly are marooned inside oxygen tents. And one would expect the standard ending to this tale: locals sue the hell out of everybody and scoop up millions in well-deserved compensation. But, as I was to learn, there was very little that was standard about the *Stringfellow* story.

What first drew my attention to Glen Avon's woes was that absurd name. Stringfellow. Acid. Pits. Modern life rarely shunts nouns together with such Dickensian economy. After I first encountered that singular name in a newspaper article some four or five years ago, it began to appear in my life eerily, serendipitously. If I was in Washington, the *Post* had a short update; if in San Francisco, then the *Chronicle*. If, while dressing in a hotel, I caught an environmental lawyer on C-SPAN, then *Stringfellow* would be cited offhandedly and without explanation. One evening, seated at an intimate dinner party in New Haven, Connecticut, I casually mentioned my growing interest in *Stringfellow*. Across the table a head turned and said, "I've worked on that case." Then another guest spoke up. He, too, was indirectly involved. I was not following the case; it was pursuing me.

The newspaper reports I read created a sense of cyclopean dimension: a specially constructed courtroom, private judges, secret negotiations, a quarter-million pages of pretrial documents, and legal processes of absurd intricacy. The more I studied *Stringfellow*, though, the less it seemed to me to be simply a complex of lawsuits. It became, in my mind, a diorama of the twentieth century and all its plagues: complexity, chaos, existential fear, tedium, colossal wads of money, and a neo-medieval conviction that the objective truth is attainable if only one can spend enough money and take enough depositions.

I wanted to look at *Stringfellow* up close—not only to wade into the particulars of the case but to enter the world that it had created. Four thousand people bound together for nearly two decades constitutes a kind of community, one that is very modern and American—built not upon tribal identification or religious tenets or a credo of common virtue but upon shared victimization. And beyond the plaintiffs, there were hundreds of others—lawyers, clerks, government functionaries—who had spent years wandering the *Stringfellow* landscape. And so, last fall, I decided to fly to California and explore their world.

The creative force that transfigured a neglected dump into a legal nightmare was the case's inherent complexity. For example, *Stringfellow* has all the superficial features of a

[1] Stringfellow *boasts many of the standard villains of the classic toxic-waste story—Texaco, General Electric, Rockwell, Lockheed. But the list of offending companies goes on to include some ambitious newcomers: Rich Steel Pickling Company, Evr-Gard Coating Corp., George Industries, J&M Anodizing, Mask-Off Company, Basic Industries, Inc., Buck's of Upland, and, finally, a Mrs. Lucille Hubbs.*

Photographs by David Graham

straightforward class-action suit—corporate negligence, thousands injured—but it is not one. In a true class-action suit, such as Love Canal or the Dalkon Shield case, a large group of plaintiffs can sue as an individual, because each plaintiff has more or less the same complaint. *Stringfellow* was not so straightforward. The dump didn't contain just one chemical; it had hundreds of them. The chemicals didn't intrude into the plaintiffs' lives by an established path: some town residents said that the toxins leached into their water; some claimed that their soil had been contaminated; others claimed that the poisons wafted into their homes on the Santa Ana winds. What's more, each of the four thousand plaintiffs was suffering from a different set of ailments, ranging from young Phillip Leyva's "extreme retardation of bone maturation," "learning problem at school," and "uncontrollable crying" to Barbara Provonsha's "nightmares," "memory loss," and "tingling sensation in lips."

Stringfellow was so complex that it had to be seen as four thousand separate personal-injury cases—think of four thousand car accidents—packaged together. The case presented a problem unique in the history of American law. How does a court try four thousand cases that are generally similar but legally different? Judge Erik Kaiser came up with an innovative solution: he would bundle the four thousand plaintiffs into groups of roughly seventeen, and try the bundled cases consecutively. Consider the math: 4,000 ÷ 17 = 235 trials. If each one lasted a little under a year—a conservative estimate—the entire process would be wrapped up in two centuries.

Kaiser's solution created enormous pressure to settle the case for money rather than adjudicate it for truth. If those first seventeen plaintiffs raked in an enormous settlement, then GE, Evr-Gard Coating, the state of California, and all the other dumpers could look forward to two hundred years of writing checks. And so from 1984 to 1993, as depositions were taken, motions were filed, and potential jurors were called (over two thousand of them), the assembled legal minds were behind closed doors, performing an elaborate minuet of settlement negotiation. A group of small dumpers caved in first, settling in 1989 for a million dollars. In 1990, Weyerhaeuser settled for the same amount. In November 1991, J. B. Stringfellow himself kicked in $8 million, and GE coughed up $5 million. By the time the first trial began, in January 1993, ninety-seven defendants had settled, for a total of $48 million. A month into the trial, another ten bought their way out, for a combined $44 million. Only two defendants remained—the state of California and a small die-casting company called Rainbow Canyon Manufacturing.

After a nine-month trial, the jury reached its verdict. Despite claims by the plaintiffs' lawyers that they won a moral victory, the decision could not have been encouraging to the people of Glen Avon: eight of the seventeen plaintiffs were awarded nothing at all, Rainbow Canyon Manufacturing was found blameless, and the state of California was ordered to pay the nine remaining plaintiffs a meager $159,147 in damages.



THE JUDGE: ERIK KAISER, IN THE STRINGFELLOW COURTROOM, WITH THE TELESTRATOR

Nevertheless, under Kaiser's arrangement there would soon be another trial, with seventeen new plaintiffs, and then another, and another, until all four thousand had received justice. Meanwhile, in a federal courthouse in Los Angeles, an entirely separate case, to decide the pits' future, was under way. In this case, there were no plaintiffs: the hundred dumpers, along with old man Stringfellow and the state of California, were consuming hundreds of millions in legal fees battling among their many selves as to who would foot the estimated billion-dollar tab for the Stringfellow

through its third dispute there is no resolution in sight.[2]

Stringfellow has but one precedent: *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce*, the famously unknowable and unending lawsuit in *Bleak House*. "The little plaintiff or defendant," wrote Dickens, "who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled, has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world." Jarndyce was the author's metaphor for an ebbing empire consumed in furious, aimless argumentation. "This scarecrow of a suit has, in course of time," he wrote, "become so compli-



THE CABLE'S CLUE: ARE SCREAMS, WITH SELECTIONS FROM THE STRINGFELLOW EVIDENCE ROOM

cated that no man alive knows what it means."

The gorgeous convolutions of *Stringfellow*, of course, were what landed me in Riverside County, excited and ready, as Judge Kaiser began the preliminary hearings for trial two. But no one in the case could quite believe I had come. "There's nothing for you here," they said. By that, they meant that the case has no pizzazz, no O.J. True, the lawyers do not strut for the media; the witnesses do not have great hair; the crime is bloodless; Court TV will never broadcast the proceedings. Yet despite its turgid legalities, *Stringfellow* as a whole possesses a rare postmodern clarity. It is the platonic essence of a modern lawsuit: a mountain of money piled atop a tiny nugget of fear. *Stringfellow* needs no dream team. *Stringfellow is* the dream.

Judge Kaiser presided over *Newman v. Stringfellow* in a courtroom in the county seat of Riverside. Because of the complexities of the case, no municipal courthouse could contain the trial—during the early hearings, there were hundreds of defendants, which meant hundreds and hundreds of lawyers. To accommodate all the attorneys, the county appropriated a defunct, roomy beauty salon two blocks from the municipal building and rebuilt it into what is known, still, as the Stringfellow Courtroom.

My guide to the courtroom was Kira Morgan, the county's exhibits clerk. As she led me inside, she pointed out items of historical interest. The old plumbing for the salon's hair-washing sinks, she said, remained embedded in the low partitions that divided the room into four quadrants—jury, public, lawyers, judge. The lawyers, she said, sat at one of eight banquet tables arrayed on a raked stage facing the judge. On any given day during the trial, as many as forty lawyers, often pulling small carts crammed with their paperwork, packed themselves into the courtroom, outnumbering the jury and the public galleries combined.

As evidence clerk, though, Kira was anxious to tell me about the paper and props associated with the trial. "Usually all that's needed for the evidence in a case is just a box on a shelf," she said. "The closest thing I got to *Stringfellow* is probably a death penalty—I got one with a big trunk, a mannequin about five foot five, and a laundry bag with dirty clothes in it." *Stringfellow*, she explained, doesn't have an evidence box, or even an evidence shelf. She led me to a door in the corner of the courtroom. "*Stringfellow*," Kira said, "has its own room."

She pushed open the door. Boxes lined both walls, leaving a narrow alley. A thicket of picture boards—some monstrously large, seven by seven feet—leaned against a wall. Scattered throughout the room were soil-sample tubes and other pieces of evidence. Kira nodded at the floor, where a collection of large boulders lay quietly—evidence, apparently, of something.

"Boulders," she said.

Yet the overwhelming majority of what the jury saw was not in this room, Kira explained, but was stored in digital form. Multicolored computer graphics were presented via the most complex video system ever used in a courtroom: eighteen television monitors, two laserdisk players, three Telestrators (the machine

[2] *There are still other, ancillary suits born of* Stringfellow, *the most accessible of which turn on exotic distinctions in the hermeneutics of industrial insurance law.*

John Madden uses to "draw" on the television screen during football games), an Elmo (a high-tech overhead projector), a videotape player, a video printer, and assorted laser-disk changers.

Because the matrix of causality in the case involved such a bewildering variety of dumpers, chemicals, and plaintiffs, much of the case was argued in the hypothetical realm of computer modeling. The plaintiffs hired a company with the Dickensian name of Failure Analysis Associates to reconfigure the evidence for the television screen. One computerized re-creation of this intricate chemical intrusion made assumptions involving more than fifteen thousand variables.

The complexity of *Stringfellow* had other unique manifestations. Take the plaintiffs: Despite their lack of common ailments or history, they still had to devise a way to speak with one voice. So they wrote a full constitution, complete with checks and balances. The charter is divided into six articles—only one fewer than the U.S. Constitution. Article II delimits the powers of the Steering Committee and enumerates the duties of the Business, Property, Health, and Guardian ad Litem subcommittees. There are definitions of a quorum, methods for the conduct of business, and bylaws regarding the election of officers. Article VI details the proceedings for impeachment.

Some of the legal processes involved in the case are practically unknowable. When the stampede of settlements began, the lawyers had to devise a procedure allowing for possible protest from each of the four thousand plaintiffs. A few days after my tour of the courthouse, the two main plaintiffs' lawyers—Doug Welebir and John Grasberger—invited me to sit down with them at the enormous conference table in Welebir's San Bernardino office and discuss these intricate procedures.

Welebir described how the Glen Avon plaintiffs, via their own constitutional mechanism, had to approve each settlement offer; then, he explained, a separate judge—not Kaiser—had to decide whether the offer was fair to both sides.

"I'm not so sure about that," interrupted Grasberger.

"No, because then we had the challenge—" said Welebir.

"—Vis-à-vis the *plaintiffs*," said Grasberger.

"And vis-à-vis each other," Welebir said.

"No, no, no, no, no," said Grasberger.

"The state *objected* to our settlement," Welebir reminded his colleague.

"Well, yes, but that was a different track from the track I'm talking about," said Grasberger.

"Oh. Okay," Welebir said. He turned to me and smiled. "There's a lot of different tracks."

And each track, of course, had its own judge. Not only were sitting judges called upon but also retired judges, hired part-time, and even "special masters"—freelance judges, each of whom was assigned to take charge of one issue or aspect of the case. Asked to enumerate the case's pantheon of judges, Welebir and Grasberger grew nostalgic, joshing and tossing out catty memories. They ticked off the names—Trotter, Garst, Fields, Marceli, Irving—until they reached the most remote culde-sac of the process. They couldn't remember all the names. They said they'd get back to me.

The next day, I drove to Glen Avon itself. After my tour along the brightly bannered boulevards of Riverside, the off-ramp at Glen Avon opened onto wide, curbless thoroughfares. They seemed to match the distant russet hills—a scrub fire in search of a spark. The reason Riverside County located the dump here was still obvious. It is a poor town with hard, beaten dirt paths for sidewalks and dilapidated shops with misspelled signs. Judging from the billboards I saw—¡GATORADE: QUITA LA SED!—the town is home to a sizable population of Mexican immigrants. The telephone poles were ancient T-bars, shredded by repairmen's cleats. Nailed to them were handwritten signs advertising the sale of RAILROAD TIES and DIRT. Down a side street I passed Dumpsters crammed with ruined sofas and flaccid mattresses. A murder of crows, fat and shiny, tried to stare me down. At the approach of my car, they lumbered off onto the dirt paths rather than take flight.

I stopped at a well-kept house with a trim lawn, the home of Penny Newman, the executive director of Concerned Neighbors in Action, and the namesake of *Newman v. Stringfellow*. She appeared at her door barefoot, in a cheerful yellow suit. We sat in her breakfast nook looking into her spic-and-span living room. As we chatted, she scrunched her toes into the warm cozy thickness of her brown carpet.

STRINGFELLOW NEEDS NO DREAM TEAM. STRINGFELLOW IS THE DREAM

When I asked her to recall her first involvement with the case, she said it all began amid the lying and confusion that surrounded the events of 1978. The flood "galvanized the community to look at what was going on," she said. "Everybody was going off in their own direction and seeing things their own way. What Concerned Neighbors did was bring people together and focus on this one problem. It was a coalition of different groups that coordinated actions toward *Stringfellow*—the PTA, the Junior Women's Club, the Babysitting Cooperative.

Women who were running the scouts or Little League or organizing carnivals were all of a sudden dealing with this stuff.

"When you look back at it," she said, "you see how naive you were. You didn't associate everything that happened in the community with the site. It took a while before it all came together." During that time, Newman said, she didn't bother much with the science. Instead, she relied on common sense.

PENNY NEWMAN'S COMMON SENSE AMOUNTED TO A FAITH IN UNSEEN DANGERS

"We knew that lead is something that you shouldn't be exposed to. DDT had been banned. So it was on a very commonsense level, not on a very technical level" that Newman began to realize something was wrong at Stringfellow. "Then I got a hold of reports and started reading things. Once you decipher what they mean by different terms, they become real easy to read. It's just a bunch of bullshit. It's not really that hard. That's part of the trick used by government agencies and individuals to make it seem that it's more difficult than it is. It discourages people. If you know the secrets, then you become the expert and you can dictate what happens."

Newman wasn't interested in discussing her own ailments or those of her children, and just as her lawyers had done, she refused to let me speak to any of the other plaintiffs. The reason for their coyness, I surmised, was again the complexity of Stringfellow. Concerned Neighbors was not contending, as was argued in the classic dump narrative of Love Canal, that a single chemical caused a distinct disease. Instead they offered a new, untested argument. In Newman's own words: "We know that a high exposure to toxic chemicals can create a lot of problems. But what happens when you have a lower level of exposure over a longer period of time? What can we expect? Again, it was common sense. You just looked at the information."

But what, I wondered, *was* that information? Penny Newman's dependence on common sense, it was becoming apparent, amounted to a simple faith in unseen dangers, born out of a conviction that science is the government's handmaiden and that the government always lies. "They found this one chemical, PCBSA—they don't even have a standard protocol for testing it," she said. "They don't even know the health impacts. Basically they have no information on this thing." For Penny, no news was bad news—if it was in the dump, then it had injured them. "It doesn't seem to be a carcinogen," she told me, "but there are significant health impacts. There's a lot of information in Russia. They've dealt with it quite a lot there."

Russia? That sounded frightening. "What," I asked, "were the symptoms?"

"Things like rashes. But we can't know because there isn't that much information about it. After a while," she explained patiently, "you reach a point where you don't *need* to know. You reach a point where you can just say, 'It's bad. Stop worrying about how many more particulates per whatever—it's bad.'"

Of the hundred corporations that rushed into settlement with Newman's group, only one firm stood its ground—Rainbow Canyon Manufacturing. The company, it turned out, was a mom-and-pop die caster that had long ago gotten out of the business. The owners were in a retirement home, and any settlement money would come out of their daily bread. So they hired an attorney, a man named Robert Kelly.

I called him at his office. "You don't want to do this story," he growled into the phone. "This is fucking *Jarndyce* v. *Jarndyce*." But he agreed to talk with me anyway, and instructed me to meet him the next day at E2, a hot new bar in Santa Monica, a couple of blocks from the Pacific Ocean.

Kelly is a fireplug of a guy, a densely muscled man who arrived on a Yamaha motorcycle. He unzipped his bug-covered jumpsuit to reveal a crisp Savile Row suit. His opening prattle was pure goodfella, liberally sprinkled with "sumbitch" and "muthafucka." He shared with me the observation that one of the special masters on the case didn't have "the guts to slam a guy's dick in the door." We ordered beers, which arrived in tony eighteen-inch steins.

"*Stringfellow* was definitely a lawyer's full-employment policy," he said, pounding his hand on the table. He listed the excesses: fifteen lawyers showing up for a single deposition; xeroxing charges of twenty-eight cents a page over millions of pages; ridiculous negotiation fees. From an insider, Kelly had learned that one law firm charged its corporate client $12 million to negotiate a $6 million settlement. According to Kelly's calculations, the lawyers' fees and expenses in the state case alone total roughly half a billion dollars, a figure that dwarfs even the most optimistic estimates of how much Glen Avon residents will receive.[3]

"The reason the corporations settled is because they hired corporate lawyers, and that's

[3] *Such proportions are fairly routine in the world of toxic-waste legal wrangling. According to a 1992 Rand Corporation study, 88 percent of the money spent by insurers on Superfund claims goes to legal costs. The balance gets spent on cleanup.*

what corporate lawyers do—settle," he said with scorn. "Those law firms cut pretty good deals for themselves and fucked everybody else. A hundred corporations got screwed because they hired attorneys who were afraid to try a lawsuit. I was the only trial attorney! The plaintiffs are getting screwed, too, but then they *should* get screwed, because they aren't injured!"

At first, I assumed that Kelly was just engaging in good-old-boy hyperbole. But as I wrote down that last quotation, he went on railing at the plaintiffs. Slowly the words sunk in: the plaintiffs were not injured. Kelly's assertion, if true, explained why Penny Newman was so eager to cite the hunches of her common sense rather than the facts of science. It also explained why I was kept away from the plaintiffs. It also explained why everyone was so circumspect about their ailments. Could it be that a lawsuit always described in superlatives—largest, most complex, costliest, densest, hardest—was constructed on nothing more than fear? Could the folks of Glen Avon have built a castle in the air and then moved in?

Kelly admitted that the dump is a mess, but he pointed out that it is a mile and a half away from the plaintiffs' homes. He cited a three-year UCLA study of Glen Avon presented by the state of California during the trial. Its finding was unambiguous: Glen Avon residents had no medical problems out of proportion with any other town. The cause of Glen Avon's distress, according to Kelly, lay elsewhere. "This case," he said, "was propelled by chemical hysteria."

Kelly explained his own client's case. Rainbow was charged with illegally dumping chromium, which, according to the computer modeling by Failure Analysis, evaporated into the air and floated into people's homes. Kelly happily recalled for me the moment that, he said, clinched his case. "The plaintiffs put an expert on the stand to testify to the amount of chromium that could have got out of the dump. To put it into perspective for the jury, I made him add up all the exposure to the most heavily exposed person in town, a guy named Asher. Then I had him compare it to the amount of chromium in one vitamin supplement pill. Mr. Asher, over seven years, was exposed to twenty-four and a half micrograms. Each pill has twenty-five micrograms. The jury couldn't believe it."

He ordered another beer.

"*Stringfellow* is like *Jarndyce* because everyone who touched it got corrupted, except me. It just became an all-encompassing thing. Stringfellow was a dump that didn't threaten anybody. That's what's so amazing. People got involved in this lawsuit and then the lawsuit became what they did. Stringfellow was their life, and they did more and more useless work to further their belief."

After the disappointingly small award for the first seventeen plaintiffs (eight of them, you will recall, received not a dime; the best-compensated, John Longden, who actually played in the overflowing lagoons as a boy, was awarded only $50,000), the plaintiffs lost some of their enthusiasm for pursuing the remaining 234 trials. While I was in Glen Avon, preparations were under way for the second trial (which would feature, Penny Newman assured me, a much more convincing batch of seventeen plaintiffs). By this time, though, the state of California was the only defendant left—Rainbow had been cleared, and the rest of the polluters had bought their way out. Not long after I left, the state's lawyers offered $13.5 million to settle the case. And the plaintiffs, who had reportedly requested a settlement of $500 million, agreed. One head of the hydra had been cauterized.



THE PLAINTIFF: PENNY NEWMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CONCERNED NEIGHBORS IN ACTION

Now that the town's lawsuit is over, one has to ask: Did *Stringfellow* destroy a community or create one? How did a little town focused on the future—Little League, Junior Women, the

Babysitting Cooperative—sour into an alliance of fear, obsessed with the past and all its failures? With the exception of John Longden, the jury refused to find any link between Stringfellow and the physical health of the plaintiffs. But what about Glen Avon's spiritual health? During the trial, one plaintiff, Cynthia Baca, described what Stringfellow had come to mean. "It's like having this great big shadow, this great big monster," she testified. "You don't know when it's going to rear its ugly head." She started to cry. "It's scary."

IN GLEN AVON, SARTRE'S NAUSEA IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE A DISTINCT SOURCE

What physical ailments the bulk of the four thousand people would have claimed, we'll never know. But the suffering that the first seventeen blamed on the dump reads like a page from Jean-Paul Sartre: fear of future illness, nightmares, sleeplessness, dizziness, emotional distress, insomnia, trouble concentrating, irritability, nagging fatigue, depression, anxiety.

Most communities learn to live with the low-grade fear and vague anxiety that characterize our century. In Glen Avon, Sartre's existential nausea is understood to have a distinct source. One teenage plaintiff said that Stringfellow had shrunk his skeleton. Because the dump made him small, he had no self-esteem, and so he quit Little League. Tieg Lancaster blamed Stringfellow for his learning disabilities, even though his father and brother shared the same problems. Others, like Helen Fontaine and David Asher, said that Stringfellow caused their depression. Cynthia Baca traced the death of her backyard chickens and goats to the pits. Her vegetables were gnarly and stunted. Her carrots looked arthritic, she said, and her corn sprouted "peculiar-looking kernels."

At one point during the trial, a twenty-one-year-old transient named Timothy Durette—not a plaintiff—got into the spirit of things by leaping to his feet in the visitors' gallery. He lowered his pants, pointed at a scar on his hip, and recited the familiar incantation: Stringfellow, Stringfellow, Stringfellow. [4]

[4] *Speaking of Stringfellow, the eponymous hero himself passed away during the state trial, on July 18, 1993. The obituaries noted ironically that the old high school dropout and former quarryman had opposed the dump until the state assured him it was safe. "When we went to restaurants," his widow was quoted as saying, "he would use the name String instead of Stringfellow because people would glare at him." The settlement bankrupted him. At the time of his death, Mr. Stringfellow, sixty-six, had taken work in a Costa Mesa shipyard, scraping boats.*

"There was no bodily injury to virtually all of them," the jury foreman, Rudolph Klutschkowski, told reporters just after the trial ended in the summer of 1993. "And the Glen Avon people who have emotional distress are people who have had ten years of litigation put on them. We just didn't see physical injuries. Once the lawsuits are over, many of their emotional problems will go away."

Last winter's settlement with the state of California may have ended Glen Avon's lawsuit, but it hasn't ended the legal work. There is a total of about $125 million—including interest—in the plaintiffs' pot, almost all of it from the pretrial settlements. The plaintiffs' attorneys will take nearly a third as their fee, plus as much as $30 million in expenses. This will leave about half of the fund for the victims.

The division of the spoils is itself a tangled affair, again because each resident has a different complaint. To adjudicate the process, the plaintiffs hired a very special master known as a "distribution master." Ever since Love Canal, dividing spoils among complicated client populations has become a new and lucrative subspecialty of the law. The most exalted practitioner of this peculiar science—which goes by the comely name "mass tort claims resolution facilities"—is Francis McGovern of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. The Glen Avon plaintiffs have retained McGovern to distribute their money.

I spent a few weeks trying to track down Professor McGovern. I spoke to him briefly by telephone in Barcelona, then managed to talk to him at more length when he stopped off for a couple of days in Alabama before jetting off to another continent. He is in great demand in these complex times.

"There are two models for claims resolution facilities," he explained to me. "There's the model of Social Security, where you give everyone flat amounts. At the other extreme is the model of the tort system, where you individualize the amount of money quite extensively." But the system has a catch. The more precise the accounting of each individual case, the higher the administrative fee for McGovern, and the less the plaintiffs get.

Transaction costs, he admitted, can run as high as 50 percent of the total pot of money. "So, generally speaking," he said, "most people trade off a little exquisiteness of individualism for a lower transaction cost."

Not always, though. "You do run into cases where people want the exquisiteness," McGovern said. It is in these cases that McGovern gets to really show his stuff. With the use

of increasingly powerful computers, McGovern believes that he can approach, with infinitely more refined precision, the always unreachable certainty of absolute truth.

In fact, McGovern said, if the variables are few enough, he can really save people a lot of hassle. "Less than twenty variables derives a 95 percent degree of certainty," he said. "That is, you can predict what award the case will bring in the normal marketplace of litigation with a 95 percent degree of certainty."[5] In other words, with McGovern's model, the entire trial, the burden of determining right and wrong, can be skipped and the two sides can get right down to cutting and cashing checks.

Even after McGovern finishes his recondite mathematics, *Stringfellow* will continue. The case in the federal courts—where the hundreds of dumpers and the state of California have been squabbling for ten years about who is responsible for the cleanup and care of the site—is nowhere near resolution. The state's argument alone is supported by 4,185 exhibits, one of which is 41,000 pages long.

The district judge assigned to the case is Reagan appointee James Ideman, known, among court regulars, as Judge "Idleman." In January 1985, Ideman appointed Judge Harry Peetris to take over the entire case as the special master for *Stringfellow*. *Stringfellow*, in short, has its own federal judge-for-hire. These days, Peetris charges $400 an hour, and, as you read this, the meter on his wisdom is running. So far Peetris has collected well over a million dollars and is on his way to two million. His assistant, Karen Koe, charges $150 an hour for her contribution, which includes carrying Judge Peetris's notes and fielding his calls. She's closing in on $500,000. The case also maintains its own private deputy attorney general, Don Robinson. By his own estimate, Robinson has logged nine man-years. ("Mr. Tangle knows more of Jarndyce and Jarndyce than anybody," wrote Dickens, "He is famous for it—supposed never to have read anything else since he left school.")

The federal decision, when it comes, is not likely to be final. There have been successful constitutional challenges to the very concept of the special master. If such an argument is successful here, the entire case, after decades of lawsuits and millions to Peetris and his amanuensis, could be handed back to yet another federal judge with instructions to *start over*.

Chances are good that as long as there are chemicals in the Stringfellow quarry there will be lawsuits about the cleanup. So, on my last day in California, I called the state's engineer in charge of Stringfellow. His name is Rich Bailey, and he agreed to show me the site itself.



THE ATTORNEY: ROBERT KELLY, ON HIS YAMAHA 650

As friendly as his first name and quick to offer it to a stranger, Rich is six feet of mainly arms and legs. For that matter, so am I, and thus, inside his rented Ford subcompact, we looked like two bugs stuck in a specimen jar. We passed through a sliding gate bright with warnings and rolled out onto a gravel road circumscribing the seventeen acres of Stringfellow at a comfy, oh, three miles per hour.

At a glance, Stringfellow didn't look very menacing: nothing more than a glade rioting in yellow blossoms, fat dandelions that look more like midsize sunflowers—yellow, erect, heliotropic, healthy.

"Blasted things," said Rich, cracking his knuckles on the windshield with a flick. "The wild sunflowers look nice, but we don't want 'em 'cause they'll root down through my cap." Rich's cap, he explained, is the layer of clay and lime authorized by Governor Jerry Brown in 1978 to cover the open lagoons and keep

[5] *According to one economic analysis, the formula to determine whether or not defendants will prefer a mass tort resolution facility involves the following calculation:*

$$[C_J+(\frac{D_h+C_p}{2})][\frac{D_h-C_p}{D_h}]N > [C_d+(\frac{D_h+D^*}{2})][\frac{D_h-D^*}{D_h}]N+[C_f+D_{cf}][D^*]N$$

$$[C_d+(\frac{D^*+C_p}{2})][D^*-C_p] > [C_f+D_{cf}][D^*]$$

rainwater from washing through the pits and on toward town. The roots of the flowers weaken the cap and let in seepage.

Rich is a straightforward guy, unpracticed at bureaucratic euphemism. Without my asking, he admitted that the cap is lousy. "It wouldn't pass standard now, but it was a had-to-do-



THE ENGINEER: RICH BAILEY, AT STRINGFELLOW, WITH AN OVERHEAD PHOTO OF THE UNCOVERED PITS

something-back-then kind of issue." When I asked Rich what kind of cap he'd put on there today if money were no object, his eyes ambled out across his fallen meadow, and he began to speak a fresh and lovely language. It was the first time I had heard such a voice since I had entered the wonderland of Stringfellow—the flat, uninflected honesty of an engineer.

"I'd be thinking extremely fine grain, you know, low permeable clay, maybe three foot, or synthetic material perhaps, and then top it probably with a foot of good soil over, say, six inches of kiln dust." We silently nodded our heads like two old buddies who'd just lathed a particularly knotty piece of oak. Rich relaxed a bit. He pointed out a cluster of gray boxes at the lower end of the site. They pump out the rain seepage—about thirteen gallons per minute—and then relay it to a nearby treatment center until the next downpour leaks through.

Back at the fence, Rich and I clambered out to stretch our legs and look at the site in the open air. Since the remaining *Stringfellow* legal battles are all about the cleanup, I wanted to know how long it might take. I asked Rich: For how many years will the pumps have to chug? How long will Stringfellow be a place?

Rich puffed out his cheeks, kicked some rocks, and stared into a powder-blue California sky. "If the status quo is maintained," he said, "and assuming extrapolation of all the trend data, then for it to reach non-detectable background levels would take over 450 years." We both stared in silence at the waving flowers.

But Rich didn't want to end our conversation on such a catastrophic note. He volunteered the information that the local Chamber of Commerce had always been a little ticked about the lawsuit. It just focused everybody's attention on the negative, he said, and what kind of life is that? Rich told me that there had been some recent exploratory efforts to consider building a rock 'n' roll amphitheater over Stringfellow—sort of a lemons-into-lemonade kind of deal. He cautioned, though, that any plan would have to be compatible with the site, and to his mind only one alternative use for Stringfellow is even remotely practical.

"If you mixed in a solidifying agent *in situ*," he said, "and then you eliminated the exposure path of waste and put some soil on top of it—I mean, put on a new cap, and added control for inflowing water and vapor emissions—well, then, I could see a golf course."

But the Stringfellow Acid Pits will not easily give themselves up to such a tidy and lasting solution. The methods being tossed around for stabilizing the leaking dump suggest that the Chamber of Commerce's bright future is a long way off. A 1991 EPA study looked at a number of different alternatives. One called for sinking heatable rods into the dump and toasting Stringfellow to 3,600 degrees, thus turning it into a giant glass ball. Another suggested mixing in concrete with what one newspaper account described as "50-foot egg-beaters" so that the brew would harden and remain entombed. Yet another method called for plying the dump with nutrients to attract microorganisms that would consume the chemicals. But it was concluded that nature has not yet evolved a life-form robust enough to adapt to the poisonous diversity of Stringfellow. In fact, this report was the first official hint that nothing really would work—that the best solution, the only solution, was to hire people like Rich Bailey, and a dynasty of curators after him, to check the pumps and mow the dandelions for the next half millennium. ■

THE MIRROR

By Lynn Freed

I came into that house of sickness when the Great War was over, as a girl of seventeen. They were there waiting for me, father and daughter, like a pair of birds, with their long noses and their great black eyes. The girl was a slip of a thing, no more than twelve, but she spoke up for the father in a loud, deep voice. "Can you do this, Agnes?" "Have you ever done that?" And the old man sat in his armchair with his watch chain and his penny glasses, his pipe in his mouth and the little black mustache. Sometimes he said something to the girl in their own language, and then she would start up again, "Agnes, do you know how to—"



The wife was dying in the front parlor. They had moved a bed in there for her, and they kept the curtains drawn. In the lamplight, she looked a bit like a Red Indian, everything wide about her—eyes, mouth, nostrils, cheekbones. Even the hair was parted in the middle and pulled back into a plait.

From the start, she couldn't stand the sight of me. She would ring her little bell and then, if I came in, give out one of her coughs, drawing the lips back from the raw gums to spit. And if that didn't do the trick, she growled and clawed her hands. So I had to call the native girl to go in and put her on the pot or whatever it was she wanted this time. I didn't mind. I hadn't come all this way to empty potties. They'd hired me as a housekeeper, and if the old woman was going to claw and spit every time I entered the room, well, soon she would be dead and I'd still be a housekeeper.

They gave me a little room on the third floor, very hot in the hot season, but it had a basin in it and a lovely view of the racecourse. Every Saturday afternoon, I would watch the races from the window, the natives swarming in through their entrance, and then the Europeans in their hats, with their cars and drivers waiting. After a while, I even knew which horse was coming in, although I could only see the far stretch. But I never went down myself, even though Saturday was my day off, and I never laid a bet.

I kept my money in a purse around my neck, day and night. I didn't trust the natives, and I didn't trust the old man I worked for. Every week, he counted out the shillings into my palm, and one before the last he would always look up into my face with a smile to see if I knew he had stopped too soon. The daughter of the house told me it was a little game he played. But I never saw him play it on the natives. There were two of them, male and female, and they lived in a corrugated iron shack in the garden. My job was to tell them what to do and to see they didn't mix up dishes for fish and dishes for meat, which they did all the time regardless.

Lynn Freed's most recent novel is The Bungalow.

Illustration by Becky Heavner

It was the daughter who had to [illegible] the rules at the kitchen for me, delivering the whole palaver in that voice of hers, oh Lord! And once, when there was butter left on the table and the meat was being carved, it was she who called me in and held out the butter dish as if it had bitten her on the nose. And the old man, with his serviette tucked into his collar, set down the carving knife and put a hand on her arm. So she shut up.

There were other children too, but they were grown-up and married. Some of the grandchildren were older than this girl, older than me too. One of the grandsons fancied me. He was about my age, taller than the rest, and he had blue eyes and a lovely smile. But I hadn't come all the way to South Africa to give pleasure to a Jewboy, even a charmer. I meant to make a marriage of my own, with a house and a servant too.

Then, one day, the old man sent up a mirror for my room, and I stood it across one corner. It was tall and oval and fixed to a frame so that I could change the angle of it by a screw on either side. For the first time ever I could look at myself all at once, and there I was, tall and beautiful, and there I took to standing on a Saturday afternoon, naked in the heat, shameless before myself and the Lord.

Perhaps the old man knew. When I came into the room now, he would look up from his newspaper and smile at me if the daughter wasn't there. And, under his gaze, it was as if we were switched around, he and I, and he were the mirror somehow, and I were him, looking at myself and knowing what there was to see, the arms and the legs, the breasts and the thighs, the hair between them. And in this way I became a hopeless wanton through the old man's eyes, in love with myself and the look of myself. I couldn't help it. I smiled back.

And then, one Saturday afternoon, he knocked at my door and I opened it, and in he came as if we had it all arranged, and he went straight over to the mirror and looked at me through it. I looked, too, a head taller than he was, bigger in bone, and not one bit ashamed to be naked.

The first thing he did was to examine the purse around my neck, which I always wore, even in front of the mirror. He fingered it and smiled, and looked up into my face. I thought he might try to open it and start up one of his games, but he didn't. He left it where it was and put his hands on my waist, ran them up to my breasts, and put his face into the middle of them. And then he took them one at a time and used his lips and his tongue and the edge of his teeth, and all this silently except for the jangle of my purse and the roar of the races outside. Somehow he unbuttoned himself and had his clothes off and folded on the chair without ever letting me go. And we were in and out of the mirror until he edged me to the bed, and there we were, in the heat, under the sloping ceiling, the old man and me, me and me, and I never once thought of saying I wasn't that sort of girl. And when he had gone and I found a pound note on the table, I didn't think so then either. Money was what there was between us. I was hired as a housekeeper. And he had given me my mirror.

She found out about it, of course, the old cow downstairs. I heard her coughing out her curses at him, whining and weeping. But he didn't say much. And when the daughter came to find me in the kitchen parlor and announced in that voice of hers that I was never to go into her mother's room again, who did she think she was punishing?

Still, I felt sorry for the girl, ugly little thing, still flat in the chest, with the thin arms and the yellow skin and a little mustache on the upper lip. I would have told her how to bleach it, but she wouldn't look at me now. Nor would she look at her father. She sat at the table with her eyes fiercely on the food, saying nothing at all. It was only to her mother that she would speak willingly, rushing into the front parlor when she came home from school, performing her recitations there, as if the old woman could understand a word of them.

For me, the house was separated in another way—up there, where it was airy and he came to kneel before me in silence; and down here the dark sickness, the smells of their food and the sounds of their language, the natives mooching around underfoot.

And meanwhile, my money mounted up. The old man kept to the habit of leaving some for me every time. Not always a pound but never less than 2,6. After a while, there was far too much to fit into the purse, so I hid the notes in a place I had found between the mirror and its wooden backing, hid the larger coins inside the stuffing of my pillow. One Wednesday, when I had the afternoon off, I took it out of the hiding places and went down to the Building Society and put it in there. But still I wore my purse around my neck, and he loved to notice it there, and to smile as he began to unbutton.

His teeth were brown from the pipe, with jagged edges to them, and his legs and arms were thin and yellow like the girl's, with black hair curling. But I didn't have to ask myself what it was about his oldness and his ugliness that I waited for so impatiently at my mirror. The younger men, the beautiful young men I saw at the races or on my way through the racecourse into town, or even the sons and the grandsons of the household, who were always looking at me now but not in the same playful way—they would bend me to themselves, these young men, require a certain sort of looking back and laughing into the future. Oh no.

In the evenings, I brought the old man his sherry on a tray. He drank a lot for a Jew—two or three sherries, and wine too, when he felt like it. And then once he looked up at me as I put down the tray, and there I was in that moment wondering how I could bear to wait until Saturday, and somehow he knew this because that night he came up the back stairs after the daughter was quiet in her room, and in the candlelight it was even better, the curves and the colors, my foot in his hand, pink in the candlelight as he put it to his cheek and then held it there as he slid his other hand along the inside

of the thigh. And I have never felt so strongly the power of being alive.

And then one Saturday afternoon, I was at the mirror waiting, and the door opened and it was the daughter to say they had called in the doctor, her mother was dying. Except that she didn't get it out because of the sight of me there, naked, with my purse around my neck. And I just smiled at her, because this was my room and she had no business coming in without knocking, and also I liked the look on her face as she gazed at me. And then, as I sauntered to the wardrobe for something to cover myself with, she said, "I knocked, but you didn't hear," and she said it so politely for once, and in a normal voice, that I turned and I saw that she was crying, the eyes wide open and staring while the tears found a course around the nose and into the mouth. And she looked so frail, gaping there like a little bird, and she would be so lost now that the cursing old bitch was actually dying, that I went to her, naked as I was, and put my arms around her, and she didn't jump back but buried her face between my breasts as her father did and held me around the waist, snorted and wept against me for a while.

"The races are on," I said, to calm her down, and "Shall I dress and come downstairs?" But she just held on tighter, and I saw that she was looking at us in the mirror, and there we were, a strange pair hugged together when he arrived in the doorway behind us, and, even so, we didn't turn but stood there, all three of us staring at each other until he said something to her in their language and she sort of melted on the spot, folded down onto the floor in front of me, her hands around my ankles, weeping again. And of course I knew it had happened, the old woman was dead, and that it would change everything, had changed things already. There he stood in my mirror, a tired and ugly old man, muttering something to his youngest daughter. She would take over now, this strange bird at my feet. It was the way it would be, that I knew. And I must get dressed and find my way in the world. ■

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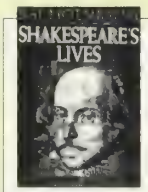
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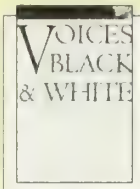
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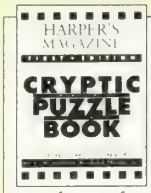
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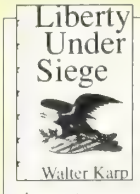
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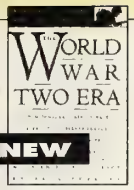
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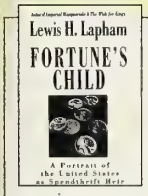
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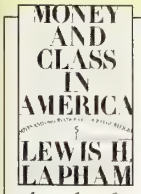
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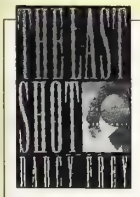
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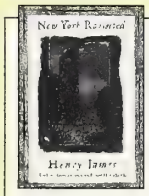


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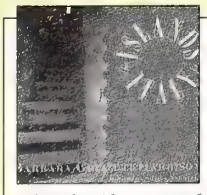
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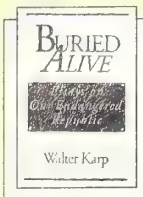
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MODERN VICTORIANS

Dressing politics in the costume of history

By Marilynne Robinson

The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values, *by Gertrude Himmelfarb, Knopf, 314 pp., $24.*

Ever since the Cold War ended, America has acted like a defeated nation. We've turned against our institutions as if they had failed us, as if we were the victims of some great fraud lately and suddenly revealed to us. In a period dominated by people who call themselves conservatives, our own national past is never invoked; conservatism has come to mean loyalty to an ideology called capitalism, which is neither named nor implied in once-authoritative documents such as the Constitution.

It is as if the long struggle had taken place not between real cultures and societies but between two economic theories—capitalism and communism—even though neither theory had ever been realized in pure form. The foundering of the Soviet bloc is cited by conservatives to discredit every custom and practice in the American polity, however venerable, that even appears to resemble "socialism." But another possible conclusion to draw from these events is that it is foolish and destructive to attempt to conform any culture to an economic theory.



Granting that our success in the Cold War is deeply equivocal—everlasting harm has been suffered by both sides, and the consequences of the Soviet collapse seem potentially very fearsome—the plain fact is that insofar as the Cold War tested our social cohesiveness and our economic vitality, these attributes did not fail us. We may well need them again.

We seem, however, as baffled as any newly non-Soviet republic. For the first time since the American Revolution, we have no sense of an authoritative past. This loss is in great part the result of leftist teaching and scholarship, which was iconoclastic in deference to newer idols, slovenly, and driven by theories that provide conclusions in advance of (or in place of) inquiry and reflection. For a long time now the view has flourished in the academy that one may make what one will of the text of culture and history. Revisionists of every kind have seen the wisdom of this approach, disembarrassing themselves of the Holocaust or of the less-benign aspects of slavery. As a consequence, we have lost our sense of continuity, norm, and precedent.

Gertrude Himmelfarb's collection of essays titled *The De-Moralization of Society* epitomizes this revisionism. Since its publication in February, this ostensible work of history has been widely and respectfully

Marilynne Robinson is the author of Mother Country *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux).*

Engraving by T. de Thulstrup from *Harper's Weekly*, July 28, 1883

reviewed. It is said to be very influential among the new members of Congress; Newt Gingrich has alluded to it in a speech to the National League of Cities. It's no mystery why this is so: within American culture the mere claim to intellectual rigor—or virtue or morality—is now deferred to. But used in this manner, "rigor" and "morality" propose that this great, rich nation visit its resentments on the poor and obscure even while the very privileged are excused of responsibility. Unhappy societies tend to blame and punish the weakest among them. Should we wish to enjoy the illusion of righteousness at the cost of that disgrace, Himmelfarb has given us a kind of handbook, with quaint Victorian illustrations.

Americans have no general knowledge of history, and are therefore unable to judge the validity of arguments and examples that appear to have the authority of history behind them. And we are deeply out of love with ourselves, which heightens the attraction of the past as an idea. From novels and costume dramas, we think we know that Victorians were picturesque, as we are not, and that they were fastidious in their morals and manners. We associate the Victorians with certitude, discipline, and sentiment, and increasingly we feel the absence of these things in ourselves. We forget, if we ever knew, that the Victorians were notorious for the severity and cruelty of their social arrangements.

The willingness to think well of Victorians has been stimulated by political trends that, in turn, have put this sentiment to profitable use. This is not mere nostalgia at work: what is being proposed to us is a highly developed economic and political agenda. Yet, only oblique attribution is provided: Margaret Thatcher is quoted at the beginning and mentioned at the end of this book, perhaps because, as the author tacitly concedes, the kind of "reform" advocated here has, in Britain, produced no good result.

Gertrude Himmelfarb is a noted American historian of Britain in the nineteenth century. In *The De-Moralization of Society*, and in essays adapted from it, she argues that American society can be rescued from moral crisis by emulating the New Poor Law. This legislation, enacted in England in 1834, was designed to enforce a distinction between the worthy and the unworthy poor. The law enshrined "less eligibility," the notion that if a harsh enough social stigma is attached to relief aid, fewer poor people will "choose" it. Less eligibility was achieved by reducing the amount of such relief while enhancing the shame that was attached to it.

Himmelfarb offers no specific historical occasion for the New Poor Law. It was in fact both a response to accelerating urbanization and the expression of an ancient impatience with the very existence of the indigent. In the early industrial period, orphans and pauper children were sent in lots of hundreds to work in factories, where their size and docility made them the most desirable workers. Those who survived youth became less economically useful and created a large population of chronically indigent people. The New Poor Law expressed the view that indigence was caused instead by a failure of character brought on by the receipt of charity or relief. This is what the Victorians, and Himmelfarb, mean by "demoralization."

Beginning with the fourteenth-century Ordinance of Labourers, the dependent poor in England had been beaten, branded, badged, and auctioned. By approving the New Poor Law, Parliament produced a "reform" that was inhumane even by the standards of the past, for exactly those provisions Himmelfarb holds up to our admiration. It is her belief that in the supposed absence of stigmatization and shame, "we have lost the moral principles, to say nothing of the moral vocabulary," to deal with the "social pathology" associated with poverty. She argues that the rigors visited upon the English poor were inspired by a concern for their moral and material well-being. "The principle of 'less eligibility,' " Himmelfarb writes, "the 'workhouse test,' the distinction between 'pauper' and 'poor' . . . today seem invidious and inhumane. At the



time, however, they were the result of a conscious moral decision: an effort to discourage dependency and preserve the respectability of the independent poor, while providing at least minimal sustenance for the indigent." This is a very large assumption, full of consequence. It lies behind her confidence that the Victorians, precisely in their treatment of the poor, hold the key to "re-moralizing America."

Himmelfarb is much inclined to assertions that float free of her evidence. In a defense of orphanages published in the *New York Times*, she wrote, "Throughout the Victorian period, private institutions . . . were generally more humane than the public ones. Again, these were not nearly as humane as we would like today, or, for that matter, as reformers at the time would have liked. But neither were they as 'Dickensian' as we might think." The informational content of this passage is zero.

The writer is given to comparisons between things whose meanings cannot possibly be established. A paraphrase of the statement above might be that Victorian orphanages do not entirely deserve their evil reputation. But the implied meaning—the one the reader is clearly meant to take away—is that the Victorian orphanage is an appropriate model for social policy. This conclusion is by no means earned. The "orphanage" in *Oliver Twist*, to which she refers in her *Times* op-ed, was in fact a workhouse where infant paupers were farmed out. The novel was written in protest against the New Poor Law, which had as one notorious stipulation the punitive separation of mothers and children. This fact may have provided the connection in Himmelfarb's mind between the workhouse and the proposed orphanages.

In an essay in the *De-Moralization of Society* called "'The Mischievous Ambiguity of the Word *Poor*,'" Himmelfarb notes that "poor" in ordinary British usage meant "the 'laboring classes,' who, however poor, were self-sustaining," a definition that does not survive the paragraph.

> The Poor Law Report of 1834 tried resolutely to eliminate "the mischievous ambiguity of the word *poor*." But the obdurate fact remained: poor and pauper existed in a continuum . . . in which a workingman might find himself, for a shorter or longer period, having to resort to relief or charity. The word "poor" was ambiguous because the reality was. The reformers, of course, knew this; they themselves continually used "poor" where they meant "pauper." But for the sake of the poor as much as for society and the economy they sought to remove that ambiguity.

The distinction was murkier still as a consequence of the Speenhamland system, a practice begun in the late eighteenth century that provided "rates in aid of wages" to employed workers whose earnings dropped below subsistence level. Himmelfarb notes that this system was criticized for, among other things, "encouraging dependency upon the parish" (although it was clearly the employers who were in fact dependent). The Laws of Settlement and Return, by means of which the Poor Laws were enforced, prevented the destitute from leaving their home parish to find another market for their labor. It is important to remember that the great majority of people during this period belonged to the class of the poor, and that the word "poor" was fully as synonymous with "labourers" as it was with "paupers."

Thus, the distinction between "poor" and "pauper," though it was a matter of great practical consequence, was not in fact descriptively meaningful. Yet Poor Law reformers thought it right to attach moral opprobrium to the misfortunes of those who fell on the wrong side of this supposed dividing line, and Himmelfarb is full of admiration:

> At a time when poverty and pauperism coexisted so closely, when there was such a narrow margin separating the two, reformers thought it reasonable to try to prevent the poor from lapsing into pauperism by making that prospect repugnant. This was the rationale of less-eligibility and of the stigma of pauperism. Today the word "stigma" has become odious, whether applied to dependency, illegitimacy, addiction, or anything else. Yet stigmas are the corollaries of values. If work, independence, responsibility, respectability are valued, then their converse must be devalued, seen as disreputable. The Victorians, taking values seriously, also took seriously the need for social sanctions that would stigmatize and censure violations of those values.

It is tempting to conclude that when Himmelfarb uses the word "Victorians" she means the wealthy few. But her meaning is more elusive than that. She means those few if and when they agree with her. For example, she quotes Benjamin Disraeli, a Victorian by any other definition, as saying of the New Poor Law, "I consider that this Act has disgraced the country more than any other upon record. Both a moral crime and a political blunder, it announces to the world that in England poverty is a crime." Far from encoding his values, the law offended them. Surely if not he then the reader deserves the courtesy of a reply, since this reprehensible Act is being urged on us as a model for public policy.

It is Himmelfarb's unsettling habit to cite contemporary witness only to dismiss it. She writes: "The facts, it is now evident, were more in keeping with the reformers' [i.e., Parliamentarians'] claims than with those of the critics [such as Disraeli and Dickens]. If the workhouses were not the 'pauper palaces' that some thought them, they were, for the most part, better than they had been earlier in the century." We are told nothing about workhouses here except that we must discount what we've read about them elsewhere.

But to return to Disraeli's criticism. It is quite clear that the New Poor Law, in precisely the way it recommends itself to Himmelfarb, was punitive, bringing down severe social censure upon plain destitution. This is a matter of more than historical interest. In the nineteenth century shame had to be enlisted against the indigent in Britain because wages were so low that there was little positive inducement to work. British economists (except, as Himmelfarb notes, Adam Smith) assumed that the natural wage of a worker was subsistence. "Subsist" means "exist," and the word seems to have been used with precision.

So it was difficult to make a pauper's condition "less eligible" without starving him or her outright.

The problem is knotty in the Gordian sense, insoluble if its terms are granted. The logical solution, one would think, would be to raise wages. If less-eligibility has begun to make sense in late-twentieth-century America, it is because we have allowed the minimum wage to drift downward for so long that it has become meaningless. At the same time, the Federal Reserve uses interest rates to maintain a significant level of unemployment, perhaps with the depression of wages as one intended effect. I know the arguments that are made for such a policy, but it benefits certain aspects of the economy by impoverishing a significant part of the population. All of this seems to me morally suspect enough without any talk of stigmatizing those who are required to bear the burden. It is simply dishonest in this work-obsessed culture to speak as if poverty and unemployment were not already full of shame for the very great number of working people who cannot be sure of avoiding one or both of them.

The essay titled "The Jew as Victorian" brings issues of method and argument sharply into focus. The essay examines a study of London's Jews, written in 1889 by Beatrice Webb, later a founder of Fabian socialism, as part of the inquiry undertaken by industrialist Charles Booth into the state of the poor. There was at the time significant immigration of Jews from Europe, and the Jewish community in London took responsibility for their own numerous poor. Himmelfarb reports Webb's findings as follows: a modest amount of money went to poor relief, "small sums went for emigration, sanitary inspection, and the like, but the bulk was given to individuals as capital for trade and business. The intention was to enable recipients to become self-supporting, and the success of this policy was such that . . . there was not in the Jewish community, as there was in England at large, a 'chronically parasitic class of "paupers." ' Because of 'the character of those who take' or

The women of Vietnam on forty years of war

AFTER SORROW

AN AMERICAN AMONG THE VIETNAMESE



LADY BORTON

FOREWORD BY GRACE PALEY

"Humane, angry, loving, smart, relentless, sweet, brave, caring...."
• Tim O'Brien, author of *In the Lake of the Woods*

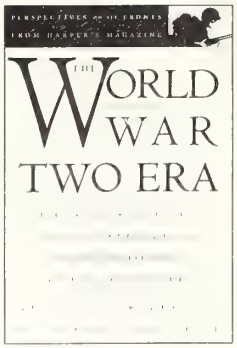
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EXECUTIVE BLUES:

DOWN AND OUT IN CORPORATE AMERICA

by G. J. Meyer

Nearing fifty years of age, G. J. Meyer was "let go" from his position as vice president of public relations at McDonnell Douglas. With a lofty standard of living to maintain, afraid, rejected, and feeling useless, he began to look for a new job. Eventually he found one in a distant city, which forced his family to relocate. Within a year this job, too, was eliminated, and Meyer found himself thrown onto the job market once again.

This book interweaves Meyer's "war stories" of the chaotic labor market—the vague "searches" conducted by corporations, shabby treatment at the hands of headhunters, the trials of his fellow "living dead" in outplacement—with remembrances of his past as a blue-collar "wonder boy."

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'the method of those who give,' Jewish charity did not have the demoralizing effects that relief had for the rest of the population."

No stigma, no shame, no workhouse, no "less-eligibility"—by what miracle could these people have escaped demoralization? It is remarkable that Himmelfarb can find a quintessential Victorianism within a community that absorbed waves of impoverished immigrants yet departed absolutely from the practices she most admires in the Victorians. It seems to me there is a lesson to be learned here. But Himmelfarb ignores this vivid proof that generosity is indeed economically sound.

Himmelfarb is a self-declared admirer of religion, though by her lights religion seems little more than a means of enforcing socially desirable behaviors, now sadly in abeyance. She admires the piety of the London Jews without going into particulars. But the benevolent customs of the Jews sound like something they might have learned from Moses. Since religion and tradition are invoked so often these days, and since Moses is the great fountainhead of our civilization, and since he left (depending on your politics) some remarkably beautiful laws, and since very few people have read them or heard them, I will quote a few verses to make the point that the phenomenon being described here is not Jew as Victorian but Jew as Jew:

> When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.
>
> When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.
>
> When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.
>
> And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.
>
> Deuteronomy 24:19–22

The poor collectively and in their kinds—as laborer, widow, and orphan—are everywhere in the Hebrew Bible. They are cherished, their worthiness is never questioned, and that touching figure the stranger is present among them as if to prove the breadth of divine solicitude. Religious belief in England began a decline in the mid-nineteenth century from which it never recovered. Perhaps religion could not survive the rejection of these most traditional values.

In any event, it is clear that London's Jews did not bother to impose an exemplary shame on their needy, who as a consequence flourished and in their turn took upon themselves the care of the poor. Somehow Himmelfarb treats this as substantiation of her precisely opposite conclusion.

In a long epilogue titled "A De-Moralized Society," Himmelfarb makes an elaborate statistical demonstration of our declined state. The peculiarities of her method are fully present here, compounding every problem that arises with the use of statistics. She says, "Today in the inner cities there is a correlation between unemployment and crime, but it is not a causal one. Or if it is causal, it is not unemployment that causes crime so much as a culture that denigrates or discourages employment . . ." Farther down the page she says that in England today "there is a correlation between illegitimacy and poverty, but not a causal one . . ." There is no explanation of how such crisp distinctions can be made, and it is hardly reassuring to find them later retracted, as if on second thought.

I hope I am unfair in characterizing the argument of this essay as follows: indulgent welfare policies have created a socially pathological black underclass, which is somehow creating a white underclass; in unexplained association with this phenomenon, these underclasses are being mirrored by the "new class" now established in "the media, the academy, the professions, and the government." "It was only a matter of time," Himmelfarb writes, "before there should have emerged a white underclass with much the same pathology as the black. And not only a white underclass but a white upper class . . ." She launches this part

of the discussion with the observation that "the moral divide has become a class divide," then, bafflingly, puts almost all of us in the same boat.

This is the clearest statement of her thesis:

> In de-moralizing social policy—divorcing it from any moral criteria, requirements, even expectations—we have demoralized, in the more familiar sense, both the individuals receiving relief and society as a whole. Our welfare system is counterproductive not only because it aggravates the problem of welfare, creating more incentives to enter and remain within it than to try to avoid or escape from it. It also has the effect of exacerbating other more serious social problems. Chronic dependency is an integral part of the "social pathology" that now constitutes almost a single "social problem."

I am sure all of us who have lashed ourselves to the mast of gainful employment to resist the siren song of welfare dependency deserve a hearty round of applause. But what fools we have been to send daughters to law school when by going on welfare they could have controlled the agenda of government and the arts and determined the mores of the white upper class. Here at last is the elusive secret of empowerment! Himmelfarb deplores the suggestion that the welfare mother is the victim of society. I would concede the point, if at the same time she granted that it is a good deal more preposterous to see society as the victim of the welfare mother.

Himmelfarb has said that her object in writing history is the discovery of truth. This is certainly a worthy object, by no means discredited by the difficulty of attaining it. But one interested in discovering the truth must deal critically and respectfully with evidence, and the fact is that few things in the world have been more thoroughly documented than British poverty. Say what one will about sensationalist or polemical distortions, there is contemporary testimony too massive to be dismissed. In great part it describes conditions and practices that invite the considered use of the word "atrocious." Himmelfarb discusses the problem in this way:

> Among the many myths belied by the facts (myths shared by many Victorians) is the vision of the Victorian city as a hell-hole of degradation and iniquity—filthy, pestilent, home to every vice and disease, destructive of all traditional authority, conducive to "anomie" and "alienation." It is fascinating, therefore, to find that illegitimacy, which might be expected to be the byproduct of these inhumane conditions, was actually less prevalent in urban and industrial areas than in rural ones. In the middle of the nineteenth century [the illegitimacy rate for East London] was 4.5 percent.

It is not difficult to document pestilence or to date sanitary reforms. But granting the prevalence of home birth and infant and maternal mortality—not to mention those tonic influences, stigma and shame, which surely suppress candor as readily as they do any less desirable trait—how reliable can these "facts" possibly be? By a single statistic, taken to the first decimal place, Victorians such as Dickens, Disraeli, and Carlyle are proved wrong about the cities they lived in and wrote about. Surely is not how history should be done.

There is much in contemporary life to lament, no matter how it measures against the unknowable past. But it seems to me that ages and cultures, histories and historians, repeat themselves, entrench themselves, especially when they think they are creating revolution. I know that many children on welfare are there because their middle-class fathers take no responsibility for them. I would be relieved to learn that the new restlessness with the burden of strangers' children is not simply a form of the alarming new unwillingness to take responsibility for one's own. I suppose no one has thought to graph accelerating rates of moral evasion among the prosperous and influential. That a hope of social reformation could be thought to lie in the recovery of antique methods of harassing the poor is as strong a proof of moral and intellectual decline as I have yet seen. ■

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INSCRIBED UPON THE BODY

On nose, chest, and hands, a father's life

By Natalie Kusz

Perceive him first, then, as his physical body—reclining, say, in a chair or, as is more common now, on pillows set out on the dark spread of his bed. His face in repose appears softly sculpted, its folds lying muted and random like the pliant silk drapings of bedsheets. The nose through which my father breathes protrudes out and hooks down; it was broken once or twice as he learned boxing in the army, and when I was young he had the insides of it straightened, clearing the way for more air. Now, forked tubing at his nostrils brings him oxygen from a bottle, and across the room you can hear the *sh-h-h, sh-h-h* passing through.

The texture of his skin is very fine. Looking at him—at that polished, fair countenance, those faded blue watercolor eyes—you might judge him to be old, at that final age when the visage returns toward youth, relaxed from within and translucent. In years, however, he is just fifty-nine, and has always had skin much like this. I grew up loving to watch him shave: pursued by the razor's straight and shining edge, whole swaths of beard would slide down and away. From underneath, then, appeared that moist peach flesh of skin, not a pore visible there.



Here, though, as on other parts of him, old damage is beginning to show. Decades ago, when we first moved to Alaska—Dad and Mom and the four of us children—the only work during winter was on the North Slope, far up near Prudhoe Bay. Dad was hired there as a laborer and stayed for months, mailing his paychecks down. There were, he wrote, no trees in that place and little light, and the vast winds in which the workers stood for hours reached into their clothes, frostbiting and freeze-drying their skin. My father came home with blistered patches on his cheeks, brows, and nose, and he coughed a good deal with frosted lungs. That time, his doctors speculate now, may have begun the pulmonary fibrosis he is dying of—that time or later ones, when he worked with asbestos and fiberglass and the hundred other substances whose particles he breathed. And now his face gives evidence as well: those old frostbite patches, invisible for years, have reddened and begun to deteriorate, and when he shaves the blade rubs them open like the tenuous skins on cooled pudding. I buy him creams and vitamins—E, zinc, and others—and for a while some of them work; then other places on him go raw and do not respond.

But these frost burns are not his oldest scars. Some of the others date from the Second World War, when

Natalie Kusz is the author of Road Song, *a memoir. She teaches writing at Harvard University and is working on a book about her father.*

Illustration by Vivienne Flesher

my father was a small Polish boy nicknamed Dodek, escaping with his parents and older siblings across Europe. They left their home in Zamość just after the Nazi invasion of Poland, when my grandfather, Peter, understood their danger as close friends of local Jews. They walked the long kilometers east to Little Huszczka, the village where Peter's cousins had a farm. My father was five then, and he recalls how he mostly mimed farming behavior, spreading grain for the chickens while his aunt followed and quietly redid the job. He had no business, he says, playing in the threshing machine or in the machinery barn at all, but he did play there and caught his first finger in the gears. He told us children the story as a warning, holding up that finger and showing us the end, that gnarled, bony fragment of nail that was left when the doctor back in Zamość had finished with it. It was that finger I held to walk across streets before I was large enough to grasp a whole hand, and I remember I used to ask for the story again, rubbing the brown nail cap like a stone.

In wartime, too, he lost half his hearing, first from playing with a stick in his ear and then from a flogging he received as a prisoner, with a length of wet rope, soaked in a bucket and then whipped at his head, legs, and body while a German named Kaspar demanded that he confess. My father was eight then, and what he had done was to follow a noise, stepping off the road between the fields and his German "owner's" house. He followed a rushing sound to the top of a grassy mound, and opening a wooden trapdoor he found water inside, flowing down in the dark like a river. Several Hitler Youth came upon him and shouted, "What are you doing?" They slapped him a bit, then went, as it turned out, to the *Bürgermeister*, telling him they had seen a prisoner at the reservoir, possibly sabotaging the well. When the *Bürgermeister* and Kaspar, then, took my father to the basement of a building and questioned him, all he could say was, "What is a *Wasser behälter?* My German is not good, not too good." They sent him back finally to his owner's land, blackened and stumbling on his feet and hands, and he thinks now that he almost was dying, his head and his legs so very cold, the daylight so dark outside his eyes.

So in speaking to my father you will find him partly deaf, though he lip-reads so well he can fool you. The real indication is his own voice's volume, the kind that carries through apartment walls. As it happens, the side he can hear from makes us suitable table partners, because whereas he is "missing" one ear, I am missing an eye, lost to a dog attack when I was young; to hear a person speak, Dad must have her on his left side, and to see a person next to me, I must have him on my right. In movie theaters, then, Dad and I just match, my good eye and his good ear between us, and people look at us strangely when we find we have sat down wrong and then exchange seats, articulating no reason for the move.

It is important to note that my father is not circumcised, though I discovered this only by asking, long after I should have inferred it from his stories. Humiliation, he would say, was a prime Nazi tactic, and it was utilized relentlessly. At one camp, when the prisoners were stripped and herded into barns for registration, medical examination, and tattooing, the naked women would be interviewed by men, and the male prisoners, likewise, by women. The interviewer sat across a low writing table, and the man would stand, arms at sides, on a raised wooden block, his genitals just above the table's surface. "Name," the woman would say, writing it down, then, "Nationality," "Age," and "Religion." It was at this point in his story that one day I said, "And circumcision—they would look then to see if you'd had it." Yes, my father agreed, looking at me oddly, as if he'd expected I had known that all these years. "Then," I said slowly, "you are not circumcised?" and Dad nodded, "You understand, yes. It is why I was not killed on the spot."

My father never did receive his tattoo, and I used to wish, when I was very small, that he had, for it would have been another picture-book illustration, further evidence to lay my fingers against and trace while I listened. But on the day in those barns, when Dad was just six, his family's group was hurried along after fingerprinting to get their clothes and to be loaded onto trucks, and he says he called out, "Wait. I didn't get the writing on my arm." His father jerked him close, said, "Dodek, be quiet," and the group was given their numbers on paper instead, then driven through the night toward their prison farms.

But although my father is "missing" a circumcision and a Nazi tattoo, his body bears other evidence of his history. Pockmarks on his chest and back show where his father laid kerosene-soaked rags, damaging his skin but saving him—there in the snowy woods through which the family fled—from the congested lungs and fever he might have died of. Each of his wrists has been surgically fused, both damaged at one time or another by manual labor, for his powerful muscles were more capable than his bones of sustaining extraordinary tasks.

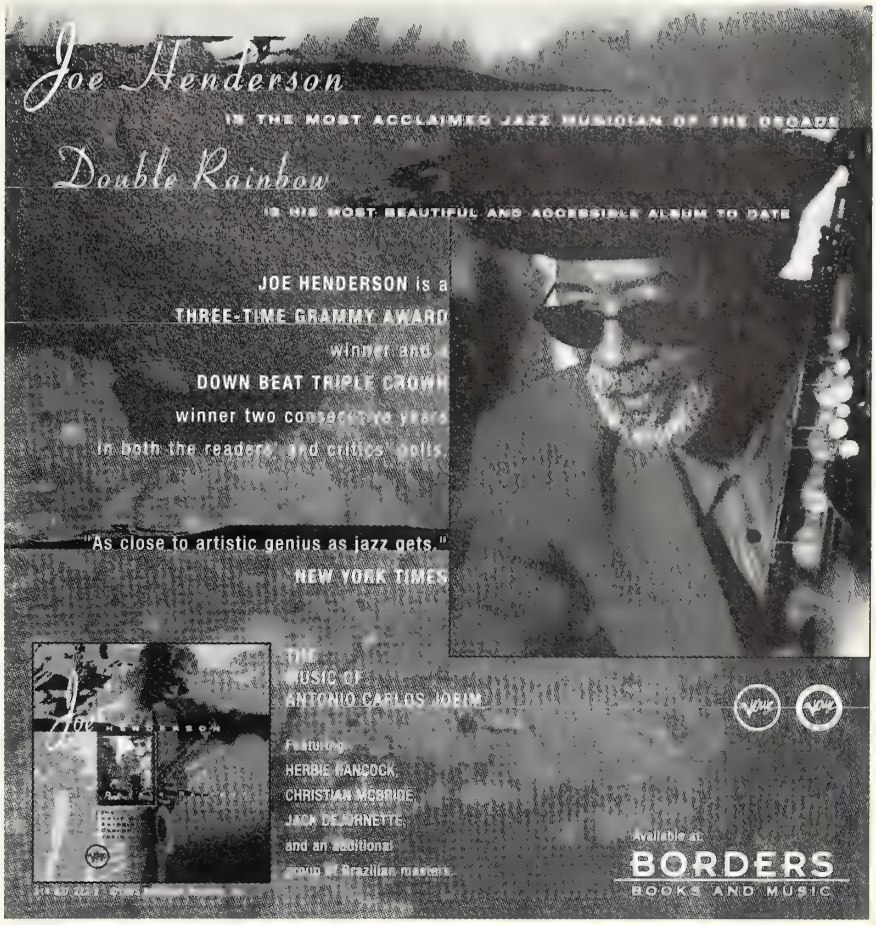
That first bone fusion need not have occurred, but Dad was in the U.S. Army then and his sergeant disliked him. When my young father came out of the hospital after having had a simple wrist repair, the sergeant said, "Three weeks' soft labor? Polack, you're dreaming," and sent him immediately to a jackhammer. Furious, Dad worked that jackhammer all day, grimly, thinking he would "show" the man he could not be broken; broken, instead, were his bones, his sutures, the very bandages that wrapped his torn wrist. Back at the hospital, the surgeon shook his head and said that there was nothing to be done but a full fusion thereafter my father appeared gawky and awkward, lifting his fork and knife with both elbows in the air asking for help on tiny things when his wrists wouldn't flex to reach the obscure nuts and bolts in a car.

He has had his tonsils out, and hi appendix, and part of his colon a well. Huge ropy scars down his calve and torso show that he has had triple

›ypass surgery twice, with leg veins pliced into his chest. In the family, hese scars are known as Dad's "zip-›ers," and they do appear capable of ›eeling wide open, exposing once nore his red and humid insides. When he broke his leg ten years ago, alling on the ice outside our house, he emergency-room orthopedist ıoted, "Well, your bones have seen laylight before." And when the doc-or heard that my father had waited wenty-four hours before coming, he vent livid, working his arms and cry-ng, "Who knows what's been going ›n inside there." Later, lying back vith new screws and pins holding ıim intact, Dad told me, "He was ınad just then, yes, but I'm almost ure I saw him laughing in the hall."

And I'm sure he was, for this has ›ften been the case in my father's ife, that those of us who care for ıim—his daughters and son, his vife when she lived, the medical ›eople he sees on occasion—be-ieve at first what we see: a man sit-ing there, making small jokes to ›ass the time, his face perhaps pale ›ut not overly so, no indication ıhat there is cause for alarm. It is ›nly after prodding those soft ›laces, hearing his matter-of-fact 'Yes, it hurts," that we palpate the eal truth: the bones, severed and grinding, causing, perhaps, critical lamage to his tissues. Upon realiz-ng this, we can only laugh—lec-ure him sternly and then laugh—›ecause he seems never to know vhat he has done, the ways in vhich his casual acceptance of suffering has led us to believe he has none.

I know he has sought to be like his ›wn father, Peter, that heroic stern ıan of invention, who at every new ›hase of the Holocaust would some-ıow save them all, or teach them to ıave themselves. In winter, Peter would trade bits of found cloth for ›read, then bread for jarred vodka, ınd vodka, each time, for broken vi-›lins, which he mended, rebuilt, and vent out with his sons to play—ıometimes in teahouses, sometimes ›n trains, always for coins or for food. f Gestapo men approached them in he station, Peter might hurry into



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Nazi headquarters itself, tuning up and performing Bach, even Wagner, knowing his sons would follow along, and knowing too that my father, that miniature blond nub of a boy, would charm the enemy and relax them, his fingers on the tiny instrument so very quick. These were the stories we heard when we insisted at bedtime, "Daddy, tell us about when you were a boy," and I think our father told them for his own sake as well, in remembrance: of what he had had, of what he had lost, of what he still desired to have done.

For when he lost Peter, finally, it was in a peaceful country, and needless—a thing he has regretted all his life. In 1950, they arrived at New York's Pier 56 on a ship carrying Peter and my father and also Pietrek, one of the two older brothers, the one they had managed to save. Their emigration visa had listed only two people, Peter and Julius Kusz. But before their going, there was the matter of Pietrek, who had managed to get back to the others, and whom, my father says, Peter was determined not to lose. (Pietrek had joined the French civil brigade, and although the brigade had since disbanded, leaving him out of work, he was no longer considered a displaced person and was therefore no longer eligible to emigrate.) No arguments had worked with the authorities, no pleas to keep the family together; "You are lucky," the officials had said, "to have papers coming for any of you." It was known but not spoken that the family's first visas had been "lost" to the black market en route, and presumably these new ones could be lost as well. So the day the camp bulletin board listed the Kusz name among those whose orders had arrived, Peter took Pietrek along, intending a deception—one last miracle, perhaps—a claim that the visa should have read, "Three passengers total: Two Peter Kuszes, Jr. and Sr.; and Julius Kusz." I imagine the plan might have worked on its own merit, but as it turned out, a cousin's papers had also arrived at the bureau, an unknown cousin with the same name as my grandfather; and in the face of those three eager men, all standing there insisting, "I am Peter Kusz," the man with the clipboard had rolled up his eyes and sent them all on their way toward America.

On the trip over, which lasted many days, most of the people were seasick, Peter much worse than his sons, for he had been prone, since the earliest Nazi beatings, to "spinning sickness," the tendency sometimes even on firm ground to turn and turn on his feet—telling his children that he did it because he was sensing every hurtling revolution of the earth. Now, on this ship, Peter became nauseated beyond reason, beyond what he could even endure. He lay in his bunk belowdecks, unable to go up for fresh air, asking for a doctor to come to him, and in the early hours of the voyage when Pietrek had left them to explore, my father went topside to look for one. The crew there sneered at him, saying the doctor was probably too busy, telling him, "Everyone is sick; he'll get better." Below again Dad told his father, "They say this will pass. They say you should go up for the breeze." He tried to assist Peter up the many flights of stairs, supporting the bent arms with his own, but Peter sagged on the steps and heaved up green bile. My father fled alone to the top rail, leaving him.

He stayed away a long time, Dad tells me, and when he says this he begins almost to cry; for when he finally returned to his father, the man lay in the same foul place on the stairs, slimy and choking, calling to the people who stepped over him, "Kill me. Please kill me. Right now." Some looked away, some grinned at the spectacle, but all of them passed up or down, over Peter's sprawled and awkward body. He couldn't, it was clear, manage the long stairs to the top, so my father helped him back to his bunk, where he would remain for the rest of the voyage.

After days, as other people lost their first nausea, as Pietrek made friends on the ship and Dad explored, Peter's seasickness worsened. No food was allowed out of the cafeteria, so Dad could bring him only little water now and then. My father spent most of his own hours, he says, at the rail or in the empty m

ic room teaching himself the piano. Some of the sailors took to making sexual passes at him, and he retreated to the music room more and more, for it was on the top deck and safe, and free of the acrid smell down below. At last, land was sighted, the Liberty statue hailed, the ship guided in and docked, and Dad went to tell Peter it was over. Peter managed to sit upright on the sagging bunk edge, and, as my father tells it, it was here—with my grandfather looking up at him, passive, saying nothing—that he understood his failure, how had he been the sick one, Peter would have planned, would have connived, would have moved the very firmament to find help. I have never asked, but do suspect, that my father wonders if this time fostered, perhaps even began, the bitter great hurt that in the end would remove his father from him.

But for now they passed through lines, met the church people who had sponsored their passage, and somewhere here they found Helena, Peter's new wife from the postwar camp years, who had preceded them on a boat weeks before. After this came many months of tension, mornings my father describes as two-edged, washed in fear and the anxious unknown but also hopeful in the way of true relief, as if, having arrived at a place, the Kusz men no longer struggled in a vacuum but worked now to improve their current spot, that firm place they had at last come to.

My father went on to travel, because a man at a tollbooth told him, "Sure. You can get on a train and go anywhere; no one asks for your permit or papers." He went first into Pennsylvania because his father remembered a cousin who had gone there. He looked in phone books and walked through Polish neighborhoods, and when he found no one related to him he went somewhere else, still looking. Returning to New York between trips, he found Peter older all the time, only fifty or so now but immensely more tired than that, wishing, like so many of the immigrants, to return to the place where he'd been born. He

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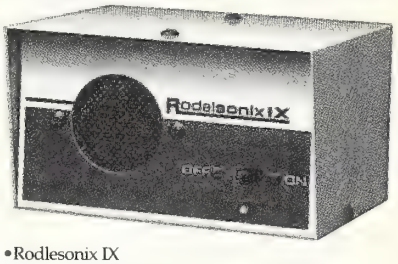
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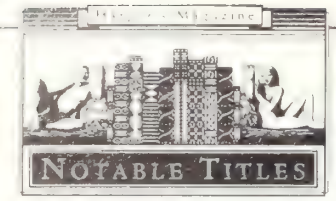
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NOTES FOR "FOURSQUARE"

Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ENDS* (send)off; TSAR*(arts); S(enate)-ASS.; LIS-A; ASS-ON-ANT; TERMITES, *(emitters); ABEYANCE, a-(ye-can-be*); RETIMERS, three anagrams; STENOGRAPHER, "has-no-regret"* around P(icture); (h)EQUI(t)-VOCATION; SQUASH COURTS, pun; CORNERS-TONES; RUGGEDLY, pun; KEROSENE*; NOTARIES*; NICE-TIES; BUXOM, homophone; PIANO, two mngs.; MAJOR, two mngs.; A-TILT; LURID, hidden; CUS(P-aramount)S; RIGOR, rigger; AVER-AGE; SO-A-P-BOX; ST-UTTER; A-I.R.(BOA)T.; O-MEG-A, rev.; IDES-T.; E.-CLAT (rev.); THONG, pun (song); DESKS, hidden in reverse; HE-XER (rev.); THE-S.E.; KHAKI, homophone (cocky).

SOLUTION TO JUNE DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 150). ROBERT MACNEIL: WORDSTRUCK. I had the soul of a beachcomber, content to wander . . . picking up whatever the sea had brought in, all the flotsam from sunken ships . . . I lived with dread for the day when I would find a body washed up, but none obliged my ghoulish fancy.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 151, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the May Double Acrostic (No. 149) are Eric Robinson, Cincinnati, Ohio; Helen W. Roberts, Port St. Lucie, Florida; and Michael Stanton, Colchester, Vermont.

and Helena spoke Polish exclusively now, no longer able to learn a new language now that war's need for such disguises was past.

Thus, Peter had Helena and Pietrek had friends, so my father went west to California, going to church and then the army, living through McCarthyism and the suspicion it fostered of every strange person with an accent, finally marrying my mother because, as she joked to us growing up, she hadn't the heart to say no when he asked. His own father grew weaker, too weary to work at odd jobs, and my father drove him and Helena back to L.A., bringing them to his apartment to live. He must have worked hard to make a home for his father, and Peter and Helena slept in the bedroom while Mom and Dad took the couch, folded out. I imagine Peter more disoriented, facing yet another new place and life, hearing the same impossible language he still felt too sluggish to learn. In the end, my grandfather was arrested as he nodded asleep on a warm park bench, was called a vagrant and a drunk and taken to jail, and when Dad, inarticulate in English himself, sent Mom to plead with the police, Peter took it as the final betrayal, the final evidence of his son's deep indifference to true fear. Packing his things overnight and in the morning handing my mother the door key, he walked out, alone with Helena, forever.

My father and mother looked for him for years, asking the Immigration and Naturalization Service to help, but the INS said it could not reveal Peter's whereabouts without his consent, and the messages Dad sent through the agency never moved Peter to respond. A letter I found last summer shows Mom trying again in the 1980s and the INS saying that its last known contact with Peter was in 1968; it would not disclose where Peter had lived then, only that this had been his last yearly report as an alien.

So it was that my father lost all his Polish family but Pietrek, who by this time was living in California, chasing women, buying cars, fighting and making up with his brother. My

parents had me and three children fter, and even in my earliest memo- ies they wished to be elsewhere, elf-reliant, self-governed, away from he civilized world. In 1969, when I vas six, they moved us all to Alaska, stablishing a life for us there—a dif- icult one, to be sure, but one that noved my father to say to us some- imes, "It was like this in Poland— people living each on their own and, learning the mushrooms and utting the good ones in soup." He ecame, as he had wanted, his fa- her's sort of hero, a conceiver of neans to an end: our first well water ose from a pipe hand-driven down vith a heavy tool he had made at a velding shop; our series of houses vere built from old gleanings he sal- aged; and when I was attacked by led dogs our first winter there, it was ny father who took whatever paying obs he could while the rest of us raveled to the hospital in Seattle.

He worked and grew sick, earned he scars he wears now like giant-size Braille versions of his life. We chil- dren grew, our mother died and we grieved her, and Dad continued her nission of urging their children into college, sending us dollar bills from his disability pension to buy ice cream or coffee or pencils. He had a second heart surgery and others, be- came less and less able to breathe, nd finally, two years ago, ended up n the hospital, coughing until his nsides were all bruised, unable to top or catch his breath. The doctor hen said that Dad had pulmonary ibrosis, etiology unknown, and from ny apartment in the States I began reading about the disease, explaining t to myself and the others, predict- ing every possible future.

None of them, it appears, will be easy. I told this to my father and con- firmed it with his pulmonologist. Soon after the diagnosis, when angi- na was hurting him and he went to see his heart specialist, Dad sat in a room and asked the man, "How will I die?" Familiar by now with this di- rectness, the doctor told how each lung would turn slowly to scars, how the air flow would diminish, how in time even small gestures would re- quire more oxygen than he has. When my father came to me in the

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The Root of the Conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan"; it calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of Territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab states possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

> "Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the 'West Bank'."

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian Arab terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time", neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank".

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waiting room he said very loudly, "Good news. My bad heart will kill me before the bad lungs." Around us on the other chairs, twenty other patients stopped talking, and the receptionist who knew us winked my way.

Dad has worked more slowly both winters since then, telling me on the phone how he shoveled yesterday and today cannot wake up, his breath is too light in his chest. I went home last summer as I always do, and I did not sleep the first month; his cough was much worse, he retched it out all night, and he could barely follow me outside without sagging down and needing to rest. He was now given bottled oxygen, and we filled the tanks in town, lifting them together into the car. We had agreed already—rather, we children bullied him and he caved in—that he would come to my house for the worst three months of winter. Yet I saw early last summer a diminishing of his spirit—an exquisite bent weariness of the sort I imagine his own father wore when Dad drove him across the country to California. "Poppie," I said, calling him for the first time the name I had always used in my head, "come away with me now. Stay with me for good, and we can fly home together in the summers." He grinned and said back, "Poppy. That's a little red flower. You think your old dad is a poppy?"

And so he came. He followed me south to Minnesota in September, I fixed him a room with a tiny desk and TV, and we are in our tenth full month as a household. He said sometimes, in the early weeks, that he was going back, that he couldn't stand to see my life so altered, me unable to find a routine. "You work around me too much," he complained. "Your father should be a help, not an obstacle." The rules were hard at first to establish—who should speak to my daughter and how, when Dad thought she was unhelpful to me; how to decide on a grocery list; whether to keep the old greyhound I'd adopted and brought home, who'd been beaten at the racetrack and now was afraid of my father, of all men. But these were minor things, and we called them such, and almost always Dad deferred to me in a conflict. If the argument became serious, we both would begin to cry, and I would look across and tell him, "Dad, just don't leave me." Peter's long-ago walkout was never mentioned, but I know we both referred to it in thought, and when an argument had escalated I could see my father check himself, breathe low, and recede a bit, desiring not to cultivate bitterness of heart. After this he would promise, "Tochka, I will not disappear. But I wonder if it is good that you get used to me here; when I die, you will miss me much more."

So thus far I have convinced him to stay, have come up with small things I need from him, sticking door latches I know he can fix. Even so, I imagine I can see his own father in him, a man both loyal and prudent, uncomfortable with a life full of need. And though I know he would not run away just to punish me, I worry he will stand far removed, doing the thing he finds easiest for me and saving himself most of all from indignity.

Today I will leave him and drive for fresh oxygen tanks. We are summering up north, in that home where I spent my adolescence, that brown wooden house planned and erected by my parents on land my emigrant father had—unbelievingly—come to own. The warm season here is valuable time, when families emerge in lighter clothes and begin the repairs, the woodcutting, the gathering of berries, mushrooms, and fish that will sustain them when the heat and the light wane and fail. For us now the season is especially dear, a reprieve even more than a work time, for it is my father's first homecoming.

When we are away in winter and he misses home, Dad says so, and so do I, and we agree not to hear this as regret. It has been good to grow toward partnership, to furnish his little room in my house, to trade small favors—a good movie for him, his special potato pancakes for me—and to plant exotic species of apple trees in my yard. In Minnesota we go to the nursery often, amazed at the things that will grow there, and from early on Dad avoided most oddly certain plants. "Sumac," I would say, "for fall color," and he would distract me with various pines, or with gnarled black walnut, or pear. Eventually, I noticed this and asked him his thoughts. The sumac was lovely, he said, and the maples as well, but he hadn't the heart for them now, any more than for that old dog I had brought home and fought over; these were good things—he hurried to claim this—but they were also sad, a sweet intolerable memory of losses soon to come. Sights he might have loved a generation ago were now beleaguering great weights on his heart: old streamlined racing dogs, brilliant red shrubs, all that which is most beautiful as it dies. ■

July Index Sources

1 U.S. State Department; **2** Federal Bureau of Investigation; **3** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); **4,5** CNN *USA Today*–Gallup Poll (Princeton, N.J.); **6** Mizell and Company International Security (Bethesda, Md.); **7** Board of Elections (Chicago); **8** Nassau County Police Department (Mineola, N.Y.); **9** Consumer Product Safety Commission (Bethesda, Md.); **10** Agricultural Research Service (Beltsville, Md.); **11** *Bee Culture Magazine* (Medina, Ohio); **12** Ingvard Wilhemsen, Haraldsplass Hospital (Bergen, Norway); **13** Victor Lebre, Maison du Lac (Arles, France); **14,15** Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor); **16** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **17** Annie E. Casey Foundation (Baltimore); **18,19** Roper Starch Worldwide (N.Y.C.); **20** Housing Assistance Council (Washington); **21,22** Fred Rose, *Wall Street Journal* (Los Angeles); **23** Department of Health and Human Services (Hyattsville, Md.); **24** Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation (N.Y.C.); **25** Federal Reserve Board (Washington); **26** *The Banker* (London); **27,28** Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; **29,30** J. D. Power and Associates (Troy, Mich.); **31** Department of Parks and Recreation (N.Y.C.); **32** Vidalia (Washington); **33** Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream (Oakland); **34** Connecticut Department of Public Health and Addiction Services (Hartford); **35** Hari Wibisono, Spokane Community College (Spokane); **36** Mississippi Senate Docket Room (Jackson); **37,38** *Harper's* research; **39** Democratic National Committee (Washington); **40** Thompson & Morgan (Jackson, N.J.).

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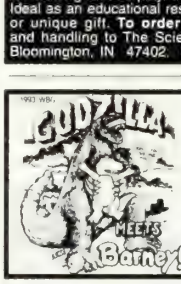
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LETTERS

Continued from page 3

I fail to follow Odets's two related assertions: one, that routine testing keeps HIV-negative people in constant anxiety, and two, that the system unfairly requires condom use even between HIV-negative men. One can't support the latter without the consequences of the former. The obvious scientific problem is that it is impossible to know if one is infected at any particular moment because of the lag time between infection and positive test results.

Certain sexual behaviors result in HIV-infection rates that far exceed those of the general population, and the use of condoms reduces this risk substantially. To argue that a lack of knowledge about the odds of infection for specific acts (with and without condoms) can actually lead to self-destructive behavior is absurd.

Coupling AIDS and education implies a causal relationship that this essay fails to establish. Odets does not suggest that current teaching practices are scientifically inaccurate, only that they are inconvenient. As annoying as it may be, the odds that unprotected sex of any kind will lead to HIV infection are quite high. Play the game long enough and you will surely lose.

T. R. Losson
Melbourne, Fla.

Walt Odets writes in his essay on AIDS education: "The New York study followed 6,704 men in the San Francisco City Clinic Cohort and found that in five years there were precisely two infections that might be attributed to oral sex. This represents a .0003 percent risk of HIV transmission over five years."

Wrong. The numbers actually represent a .03 percent risk. Still doesn't sound like much? That's about 300 people out of one million being infected over five years—roughly one person per week for five years. Insignificant? Acceptable?

Another fatal mistake.

Larry Ytuarte
Converse, Tex.

Walt Odets responds:

Larry Ytuarte's arithmetic is, indeed, correct: the article should have stated the figure as either ".0003" or ".03 percent," figures that Ytuarte and other readers easily derived from the raw data I supplied. His concern that I have engaged in "another fatal mistake," however, lacks perspective. For example, during the five years that "300 people out of one million" will contract HIV through oral sex, another 900 of those million American citizens will die in automobile fatalities. Thus the meaning of the .03 percent figure is that, in this analysis, the risk of HIV transmission through oral sex is about one third the risk of many activities that most Americans engage in on a daily basis with little reservation.

Apparently Larry Ytuarte and T. R. Losson both feel that *no one* should contract HIV through oral sex. These feelings spring not from obvious truths, however, but from the lack of value these two readers seem to place on oral sex and the important human intimacy that such acts very often involve. As in most of life, the acts for which we are willing to tolerate no risk whatsoever are those upon which we place no value whatsoever. Clearly the erotophobia and homophobia of the larger society—as well as the "internalized" homophobia of many gay men themselves—has readily exploited the AIDS epidemic as yet another pretext for banishing gay sex to subjectively unacceptable forms, or simply dismissing it altogether. But gay sex has the same human meanings as heterosexual sex. Condoms are as disturbing to the pleasure and intimacy of gay men as they are to heterosexual men and women.

In failing to understand the relationship between recommendations for *routine* HIV testing and the universal, indiscriminate prescription of condoms, even between two uninfected men, Losson aptly demonstrates his willingness to dismiss the importance of sexual intimacy to gay men. The issue is not at all that we need routine HIV testing if we are to avoid the universal prescription of condoms. We are now requiring *both* practices of gay men, and we thus re-

...ory the possibility that *sensible and purposeful* testing might allow a gay man to have ordinary human sex when and where it was appropriate. This possibility is neither a "complaint" nor, as Losson also states, an "obvious scientific problem" but a complex issue of values to which neither Losson nor anyone else should be offering uninformed, glib, or dictatorial solutions. Older HIV tests (most notably the ELISA) *do* provide information about a man's HIV status if intervening behaviors have not created additional exposure risks; and, in any case, we now have a readily available test (the polymerase chain reaction amplification for HIV DNA) that provides contemporaneous information about infection because it tests for viral DNA rather than antibodies. Our current education is paradoxically—and destructively, in most senses—asking men to routinely test and, if they and their partners are HIV-negative, to behave for the rest of their lives as if they were infected. As a matter of national public health pol...icy, this is something that we neithe... expect nor ask of heterosexuals. Th... discrepancy of policy should be a... affront to gay men, although as ... community our fear, homophobia... and shame have motivated us largel... to accept the idea, at least in public.

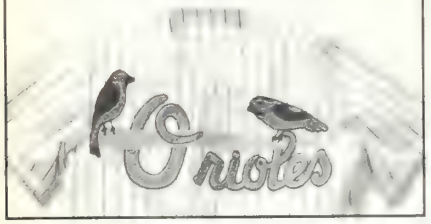
Finally, I would like to clarify fo... Losson and others the sad conse... quences of the educational polic... they would have us perpetuate. It i... not "according to Odets" that educa... tional prescriptions of universal, life... time condom use, regardless of HI... status, are unacceptable and unat... tainable. It is according to the thou... sands of men who are now contrac... ing HIV each year because the ... needs are not being met by simplist... educational approaches that misre... resent the truth and treat gay sexua... ity as dispensable. A recent stud... from Holland finds that gay me... with the *most* concern about th... safety of oral sex constitute th... group most likely to practice unpr... tected anal sex. The authors co... clude that overestimating the risk ... oral sex may lead to more unprote... ed anal sex because the overestim... tion causes many men to feel th... "reducing the risk of infection ... stopping unsafe anal sex [is] relativ... ly futile." In other words, many m... feel hopeless about remaining un... fected through *humanly reasona*... restrictions on sexual behavior.

The solution to this very r... dilemma is not, as Mr. Losson cari... tures, a matter of giving gay men ... probabilities so they can avoid "... conveniences." It is to provide th... with what we do know and thus all... them to make their own decisi... based on *their* values rather than e... cators' appraisals of what those va... are or ought to be. What a man n... avoid to lower the probability of c... tracting HIV to ordinary, every... levels of risk is simple. He must a... having unprotected, receptive a... sex with a man whose HIV statu... does not know with reasonable ... tainty. *That* is a task that man... most men could accomplish ov... lifetime, and it would seem wo... while to many more if we stop... making sage prescriptions and si... told the truth about what we kno...

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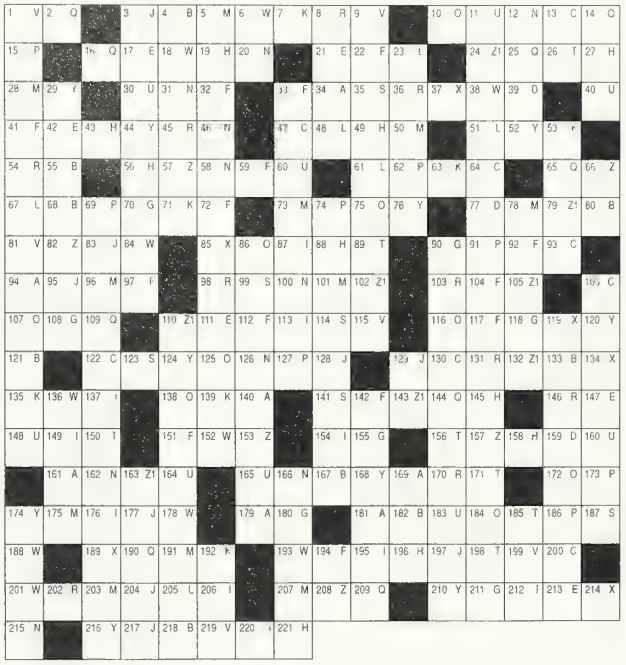
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 151

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 84.



CLUES — WORDS

A. "He has gone to the demnition ____" (Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*)
179 169 181 161 34 94 140

B. Not real, illusory
133 218 182 80 68 121 4
167 55

C. Unfortunate
106 130 122 13 64 93 200

D. Conducted
77 159 39 47

E. Crowded noisily
42 21 147 17 111 213

F. Terrific, great, super, fantastic (4 wds.)
117 22 142 104 112 97 151 41
92 33 32 194 59 72

G. Cap. of Armenia
180 90 118 155 70 211 108

H. Genus of often very tall trees of the myrtle family
27 56 49 221 88 145 158 196
19 43

I. Building for locomotive repair; sometimes K.O. punch
220 195 149 212 137 154 113 87
206 176

J. Trim, orderly
177 197 204 129 128 95 217 3
83

K. Am. actress Wanda (*Prince of Foxes, The Highwayman*)
135 71 7 53 63 139 192

L. Finger-shaped cream puff
205 61 67 51 48 23

M. "Ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark,/But he's an ____," says Hamlet (2wds.)
78 5 191 96 175 73 50 28
207 203 101

N. Conn. town, birthplace of Ethan Allen, Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe
12 126 20 58 31 46 162 166
100 215

O. Conspiring (2 wds.)
172 116 184 75 138 86 107 10
125

P. Part of a fastener, sometimes used ornamentally
127 91 186 173 74 69 62 15

Q. Old man, sage
109 25 16 2 65 14 190 144
209

R. Walking
146 54 131 170 45 98 8 202
36 103

S. Am. novelist (1870–1902, *McTeague*)
187 123 35 114 99 141

T. Dumps, discards
89 26 150 156 185 198 171

U. "Between the motion/And the act/Falls ——" (2 wds., Eliot, "The Hollow Men")
183 40 60 165 164 11 160 148
30

V. Ancient Gr. god of roads, commerce, and theft
81 219 199 1 115 9

W. Common loon
136 201 193 38 84 188 18 152
178 6

X. Apes, simulates
119 37 189 214 85 134

Y. Instilled, taught persistently and earnestly
168 52 216 124 174 210 120 76
44 29

Z. Eng. philosopher and mathematician (1642–1727)
57 66 153 82 157 208

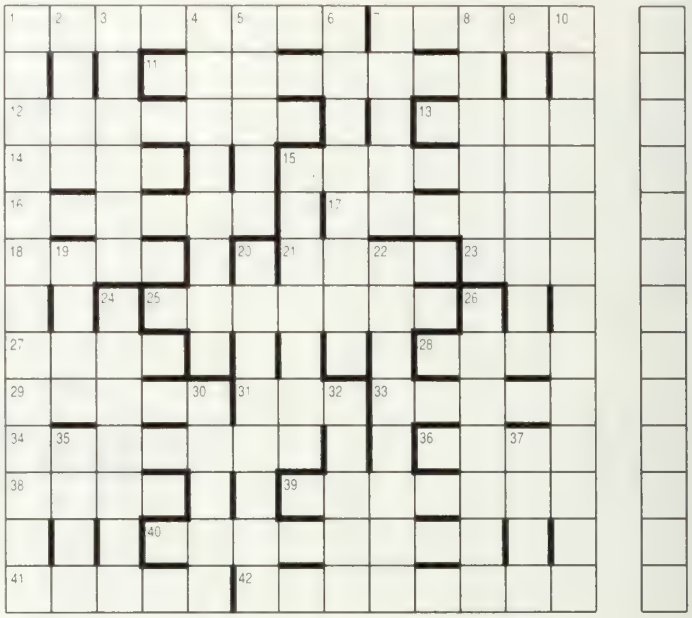
Z1. Indecisive, unsettled
102 143 79 110 163 24 105 132

Eleventh Commandment

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

This month's instructions: Adultery, idolatry, false witness, etc.—God forgot one. To find the new no-no, thou shalt:

1. . . . note that all Across answers are longer than the spaces provided.
2. . . . remove a letter from each Across row in the diagram.
3. . . . remove it wherever it appears in the row.
4. . . . note that the letter must occur in each answer in the row.
5. . . . note that it may occur more than once in a single answer.
6. . . . place each letter in the space to the right of the row.
7. . . . read God's new proscription down the column of removed letters.
8. . . . note that Down answers are normal.
9. . . . note that answers include four proper names.
10. . . . find last month's solution and winners on page 84.
11. . . . see above.



ACROSS

1. Television program popular among pains
7. I'm a help around Champion and I can't get fired!
11. Worked out and worked up
12. Was a keener game with dent hammered out
13. Too relative to a British spy
14. From sexpot to mother to . . .
15. He takes you in the Loire, swimming
16. Traditionally they keep friends on the go
17. On a Christmas note, the post-Christian *Dumbo*
18. One with the ability to detect outside sounds
21. Words [illegible]as "hot-shot"
23. Be fond of being toed out
25. Tale unfolded in acts, without speaking during breakfast, lunch, and dinner
27. Looking back on it, nine in bed is unhealthy
28. Holding office—look around—there's a catch!
29. Crazy—this answer sounds like it's in the preceding answer!
31. Noah's oldest female animal—and male
33. Bad-mouth the puzzle-maker—not half bad
34. Cause designs, as in Coco
36. Transplant roots and trunk
38. Knows instinctively time is running out for Eskimos
39. Get rid of back portion—it could go up in smoke
40. College playoffs are losing badly
41. Latin "Terminator"—when you give him money, he loses interest!
42. Encouraged delinquent teen to get apprehended? Just the reverse!

DOWN

1. Big company reunion of alumni on a tilt (13)
2. Before the first of May, I married a man in a mosque (4)
3. Child raised to take in crazy gypsies (6)
4. Cross on the inside, interminable on the outside (8)
5. Rushes up, does kind of a turn (5)
6. Mid-deck gets fixed, and I'm thrilled (8)
7. Good point to change seats (5)
8. Circulated the late edition first (6)
9. Lower level theater name (8)
10. In film, is this like being overexposed like Arnold Schwarzenegger? (13)
15. They don't believe in round chicken (7)
19. Smooth endless sarcasm (4)
20. Admitting that to laugh uncontrollably takes height (7)
22. Bowler, for example, reveals druggie apparatus (8)
24. "Squeezed" is no longer performed (7)
26. Regrets bolts, tremors, earthquakes (7)
30. To pass away a second time is upsetting and gets you kind of down (5)
32. She has genetic material of mine! (5)
35. Novice error can make one die, for example (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Eleventh Commandment," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by July 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the May puzzle, "News Clippings IV," are Ellen Bennett, Fresno, California; Bonnie Vanlangen, West Newton, Massachusetts; and Paul J. Siwek, New York, New York.



Racing to the moon.

Instinct and moonlight guide them to the ocean. For newborn sea turtles, just seconds free of their egg-shelled wombs, it is a run for survival.

That's why people working in partnership on Thevenard Island carefully concealed the light from nearby operations. So the turtles there won't be drawn off-course.

Do people make certain the only light visible is the one that leads home?

People Do.

Chevron

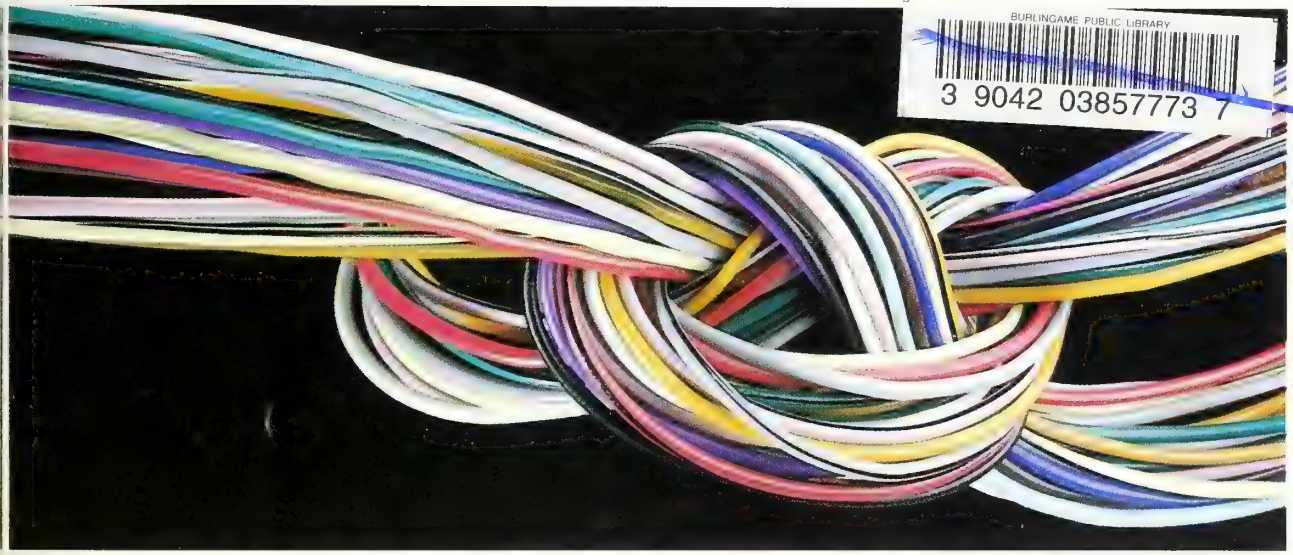
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WHAT ARE WE DOING ON-LINE?

A Heated Debate About a Hot Medium

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WHERE WORLDS COLLIDE

In Los Angeles International Airport, the Future Touches Down

By Pico Iyer

SEEING RED

In a Spanish Tomato War, Catharsis

By Louis de Bernières

Also: Christopher Hitchens, M.F.K. Fisher, Tova Reich, and Ken Silverstein on flacking for despots

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ure, landing a TV movie or guesting on a talk show would be nice. But Michele Smith is happy to be known for that fraction of a second in which an airbag deploys and maybe she's helped save a life.

Michele has been one of our safety engineers for eight years now. Even before there was a Saturn car, there were Saturn people like her. Designing. Testing. Thinking. Then testing some more.

That's the way you dream up things like, oh, patent # 4,893,874 —the latchplate on our rear seat-belts that Michele helped design. Or even a little bigger project she happened to be part of—the dual airbags on the new Saturn.

Michele and her team wanted not only an additional airbag but additional advances. A centralized sensing system for knowing exactly when to deploy the bags. And a new contour—on an all-new dash—to hold the passenger bag in position.



While the rest of us expect to be famo engineer Michele Smith is qu

She doesn't always get the credit for making a Saturn safe, but Michele isn't complaining. She knows Saturn really is a team. And besides, just look at that ritzy crowd she gets to hang out with over there.

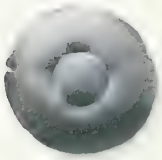


Just a few members of the airbag development team. Michele's the one on the left there.

fifteen minutes,
isfied with 1/10th of a second.

Every Saturn features "crumple zones," shoulder harnesses, available anti-lock brakes, and now, dual airbags like the ones shown here. But don't be fooled by looks. Airbags aren't fluffy pillows.

Driver's



Passenger's



They're a supplemental restraint system (always wear your seatbelts, even with airbags) that deploys rapidly. Of course, engineers like Michele Smith would be happy if you never get to see our airbags at all. They're not all that hung up on fame, anyway.

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LETTERS

Permission to Speak Freely?

Jonathan Rauch's insightful and provocative essay ["In Defense of Prejudice," May], which questions the wisdom of seeking to eradicate racism and other forms of prejudice, reveals an uneasy faith in pluralism combined with a depressing cynicism about our ability to build a society more tolerant and respectful of individual differences.

The Anti-Defamation League has long recognized the distinction between hate speech and hateful conduct. We are in favor of more severe penalties for hate crimes, but we have never sought to impose legal sanctions on hateful expression. The First Amendment guarantees the right to believe and express hateful ideas, and, like Rauch, we treasure that guarantee as a fundamental pillar of our democracy. We agree wholeheartedly that censorship, speech codes, and "politically correct" curricula are not the answer, and that law enforcement must combat violence rather than bad words or thoughts.

Rauch goes astray, however, when he attempts to extend the logic of the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech to the cause of combating prejudice. Yes, to protect all speech we must tolerate abhorrent speech, but this does not mean that we risk becoming a totalitarian state every time we condemn hateful expression. Rauch's failure to distinguish between Orwellian efforts to impose "purist" patterns of thought and the real, legitimate value in educating people about prejudice and the harm it can cause is a significant flaw in his overall thesis.

Rauch states that "if you want pluralism, then you get racism and sexism and homophobia and communism and fascism and xenophobia and tribalism, and that is just a start." But racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and tribalism have been far more prevalent in non-pluralistic, nondemocratic societies—societies in which these varieties of prejudice are considerably more difficult to combat. Auschwitz, Treblinka, Buchenwald, and Sobibor provide stark evidence of this.

The Anti-Defamation League does not believe in laws prohibiting prejudice, but we do believe decent people must speak out against it and make it unfashionable and unacceptable. We believe a balance can and must be struck between the extremes of unchallenged bigotry and political correctness. True, we can not and should not insist that an individual think in a certain way. At the same time, having learned from the Holocaust what bigotry and hate can engender, we cannot be so quick to dismiss the hurtful power and potential of words.

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director,
Anti-Defamation League
New York City

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

In his otherwise excellent essay Jonathan Rauch makes the extraordinary assertion that "the deniers

aims that the Auschwitz gas chambers could not have worked led to closer study and, in 1993, research showing, at last, how they actually did work. Thanks to prejudice and stupidity, another opening for doubt has been shut."

I disagree; there *was* no "opening for doubt." If someone came forth and posited that two plus two did not equal four, would Rauch feel compelled to provide evidence to the contrary? Of course not.

I am reminded of an old story about Lyndon Johnson: He told one of his aides to spread it around that an opposition candidate had slept with hogs. When the aide balked, saying the story wasn't true, Johnson allegedly replied, "I know it isn't true. I just want to watch him deny it."

Lee Gruenfeld
Blue Jay, Calif.

I am an Irish Catholic woman and have been exposed to innumerable jokes of each stripe. There's no bigger butt of buffoonery than the Irish: we're all a bunch of drunken leprechauns. This has never hurt me, though it does trail, far in its wake, the "No Irish Need Apply" history of my immigrant ancestors, the seven-hundred-year occupation of Ireland by Britain, and the starvation of millions who died eating grass. All the same, I do not equate jokes about the Irish with being starved to death. Being a woman, I find there is no end to the offensive jokes and images with which I am assaulted daily. But having worked in a domestic-violence center, and having been myself a victim of incest, I for one would be far less offended if the "evil patriarchy" would content itself with hanging out in strip joints, buying *Penthouse*, telling off-color jokes, and calling me "bitch" rather than breaking bones, raping children, and murdering women. In fact, the only time someone's verbal attack really scarred me was when he told me to shut up.

Barbara McNulty
Vancouver, Wash.

Cooking Up Democracy

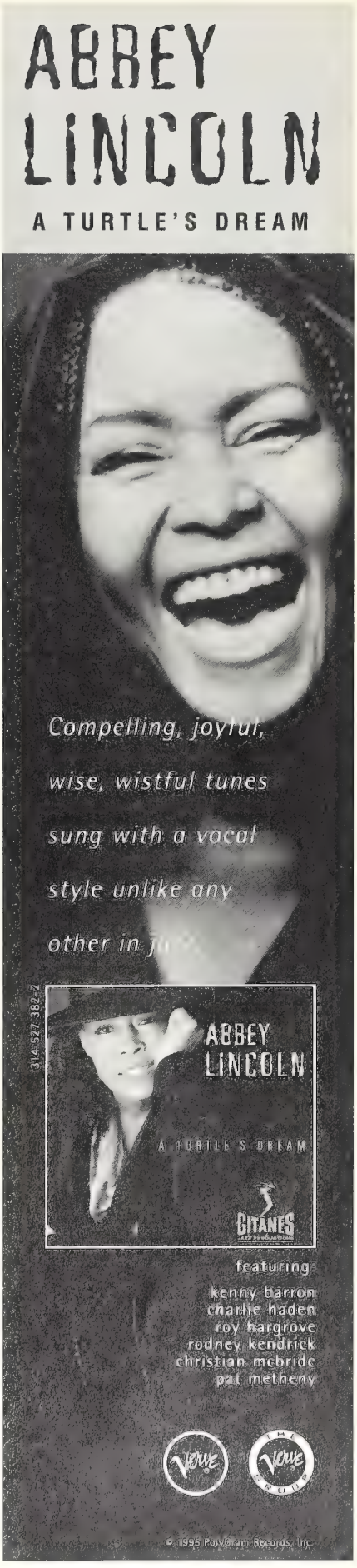
Was David Samuels ["At Play in the Fields of Oppression," May] at the same conference, sponsored by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), that I attended in Zagreb last February? His long report, which goes to great lengths to convince us that the NED is an irrelevant, silly waste of tax dollars, focuses on this conference yet makes no mention of the two organizations (the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., and the Erasmus Guild in Croatia) that convened it. Instead, he quotes at length people who did not even attend the conference and pauses to give us a detailed analysis of the participants' footwear.

In fact, Samuels pulls facts and ideas so far out of context as to render the conference I attended almost unrecognizable. For many of my colleagues from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia, funding from NED made their programs possible. In Zagreb they exchanged skills handbooks, workshop reports, school curricula, and fund-raising strategies, and forged alliances for future collaborative efforts. In spite of enormous political pressure, the conference participants demonstrated that with the right support it *is* possible to build indigenous skills in conflict management and peacemaking.

When Samuels asked me for information about the Balkans Peace Project, I gave him an armload of handbooks and reports, and I offered to answer any questions he might have. He laughed and assured me he didn't have time for that. How did Samuels use the sources I gave him? He patched together random bits from appendices and footnotes. The resulting analysis was completely out of context and demonstrated no understanding of the substance of these sources.

I can only assume that Samuels's eyes were too focused on the shoes of the conference participants, or maybe he was just looking for dirt.

Paula Gutlove
Executive Director,
Balkans Peace Project
Cambridge, Mass.



David Samuels's cynical account of the conference the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) recently sponsored in Zagreb betrays an almost willful ignorance of the meeting, its considerable results, and the larger work of NED. As chairman of NED's Board of Directors, I would like to set the record straight.

The purpose of the Zagreb meeting was to bring together democratic activists from southeastern Europe to meet with one another and with Western groups interested in supporting free government and human rights but seeking more knowledge of the region and its nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Since fighting began in the former Yugoslavia four years ago, like-minded activists living in different republics have found it nearly impossible to communicate with one another. Their respective societies have virtually no contact; for example, the telephone lines between Zagreb and Belgrade have been cut for more than three years.

The Zagreb meeting, attended by representatives of sixty-seven NGOs from the region and thirty-four Western aid organizations, was not the idle gathering portrayed in Samuels's article but a rare opportunity for friends of democracy in the war-torn Balkans to share ideas and establish contacts that will lead to practical assistance.

A few facts will give the lie to the charge that NED's programming is centered around meaningless conferences. The Endowment, which has been active in the former Yugoslavia since 1988, has provided computers, printing equipment, and vital supplies to independent newspapers and radio stations in Bosnia and Serbia-Montenegro. Without this timely aid, these free media outlets would have had to shut down. Acting through the Free Trade Union Institute, NED assists a multi-ethnic trade-union confederation in Serbia that openly challenges the antidemocratic policies of the Milosević regime. Endowment funds also help underwrite the cost of the Balkan Media Network, an electronic bulletin board that links the region's media outlets through e-mail. These are but a few of the tangible forms of assistance that characterize NED-supported programs in every former Yugoslav republic.

Among the substantive results of the meeting in Zagreb are the many proposals the Endowment has received from participants inspired by the informal discussions and workshops they attended. Although the article identifies the director of an independent Bosnian radio station as a leading critic of Western donors, this same man felt the meeting of sufficient value to offer, afterwards, a project for the Endowment's consideration.

From the beginning, the Zagreb meeting was conceived as a quick way to provide practical help to worthy groups that were little known (or completely unknown) to Western organizations and to urge more Western groups to work in the region. Fortunately, Western groups never before active in the region have decided to get involved. A good example is NED's sister institution in Great Britain, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, which will be working in Kosovo as a direct result of contacts made in Zagreb.

Samuels falsely interprets the activists' general (and understandable) complaints about the larger Western failure in the Balkans as an attack on NED, and he focuses attention on some stray inanities uttered by a handful of Western participants. He seems to have missed hearing any of the dozens of serious exchanges that took place informally. Yet these exchanges, as participants developed plans for building independent media organs, human rights groups, and civic organizations throughout the region, represent the real work of the meeting.

Nowhere in the article is there acknowledgment that the meeting in Zagreb was an indigenous effort organized by the Erasmus Guild, a well-respected Croatian NGO. The NED-supported Guild has worked effectively to promote civil society and ethnic harmony in a region that desperately needs both. For example, the Guild has successfully convened roundtable sessions that have brought together Croat, Serb, and Muslim democrats to discuss inter-ethnic relations and the building of viable voluntary associations.

As Dr. Vesna Pusic, the Guild's director, has pointed out, "It is absolutely essential to avoid replicating in the NGO sector a monopoly similar to the one that has been created by the ruling parties in most of the countries in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. That can be secured only by providing multiple sources of financing for different non-government organizations." This sentiment has been echoed by the Open Society Fund in Serbia—financed by the philanthropist George Soros—which has asked other funders to become similarly involved.

Samuels's article is too loaded with inaccuracies and distortions to point them all out. Let me cite only the most blatant ones:

1) None of the Eastern European participants had to pay their way to the meeting. Conversely, Western groups did.

2) The reference to criticism of the Endowment by government accountants is based on a 1991 General Accounting Office report. Its recommendations for managerial improvements have long since been implemented.

3) The descriptions of two grants (neither of them accurately described) that were made by NED in 1984, the very first year of operations, continue to be trotted out by the Endowment's critics as proof that it "meddles" in the internal affairs of other countries. Yet the issues raised by these grants were addressed long ago: the Endowment has strict internal prohibitions against involvement in political campaigns (distinguished from electoral processes), and NED has a policy against working in established democracies. To put these two grants into perspective, I note that NED has funded well over two thousand projects during its existence.

Continued on page 7.

00 MHz breakthrough!

New technology launches wireless speaker revolution...

Recoton develops breakthrough technology which transmits stereo sound through walls, ceilings and floors up to 150 feet.



Breakthrough wireless speaker design blankets your home with music.



If you had to name just one new product "the most innovative of the ear," what would you oose? Well, at the recent *International onsumer Electronics Show*, critics gave Recoton's ew wireless stereo speaker system the *Design nd Engineering Award* or being the "most inovative and outstandng new product."

Recoton was able to ntroduce this whole ew generation of owerful wireless peakers due to the dvent of 900 MHz techology. This newly approved breakthrough nables Recoton's wireess speakers to rival the ound of expensive ired speakers.

ecently approved echnology. In June f 1989, the *Federal ommunications Comission* allocated a and of radio frequenies stretching from 902 o 928 MHz for wireless, n-home product applications. Recoton, one f the world's leading wireless speaker manufacturers, took advantage of the FCC ruling by creating and introducing a new speaker system that utilizes the recently approved frequency band to transmit clearer, stronger stereo signals throughout your home.

Crystal-clear sound anywhere. Just imagine listening to your stereo, TV, VCR or CD player in any room of your home—without running miles of speaker wire. Plus, you'll never have to worry about range because the new 900 MHz technology allows stereo signals to travel distances of up to 150 feet through walls, ceilings and floors without losing sound quality.

A single transmitter, unlimited receivers. The powerful transmitter plugs into an audio-out, tape-out or headphone jack on your stereo or TV component, transmitting wirelessly to speakers or headphones. The speakers plug into an outlet. One transmitter broadcasts to an unlimited number of stereo speakers and headphones. And since each speaker contains its own built-in receiver/amplifier, there are no wires running from the stereo to the speakers.

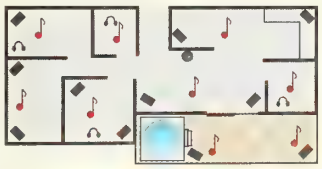
Full dynamic range. The speaker, mounted in a bookshelf-sized acoustically constructed cabinet, provides a two-way bass reflex design for individual bass boost control. Full dynamic range is achieved by the use of a 2" tweeter and 4" woofer. Plus, automatic digital lock-in tuning guarantees optimum reception and eliminates drift. The new technology provides static-free sound in virtually any environment. The speakers are also self-amplified; they can't be blown out no matter what your stereo's wattage.

Stereo or hi-fi, you decide. These speakers have the option of either stereo or hi-fi sound. Use two speakers (one set on right channel and the other on left) for full stereo separation. Or, if you just want to add an extra speaker to a room, set it on mono and listen to both channels on one speaker. Mono combines both left and right channels for hi-fi sound. This option lets you put a pair of speakers in the den and get full stereo separation or put one speaker in the kitchen for hi-fi sound.

150 foot range through walls!

Recoton gives you the freedom to listen to music wherever you want. Your music is no longer limited to the room your stereo is in. With the wireless headphones you can listen to your TV, stereo or CD player while you move freely between rooms, exercise or do other activities. And unlike infrared headphones, you don't have to be in a line-of-sight with the transmitter, giving you a full 150 foot range.

The headphones and speakers have their own built-in receiver, so no wires are needed between you and your stereo. One transmitter operates an unlimited number of speakers and headphones.



Recoton's transmitter sends music through walls to wireless speakers over a 70,000 square foot area.

Factory-direct savings. Our factory-direct pricing allows us to sell more wireless speakers than anyone! For this reason, you can get these speakers far below retail with our 90-day risk-free home trial."



Add headphones and save $100. For a limited time, when you order two speakers and a transmitter, you can add wireless headphones for only $49. That's a savings of $100 off the price of the headphone system. This exclusive offer is available only through Comtrad. Your order will be processed within 72 hours and shipped UPS.

Recoton transmitter	**$69**	$7 S&H
Recoton wireless speaker	**$89**	$9 S&H
Wireless headphone system	~~$149~~	$9 S&H

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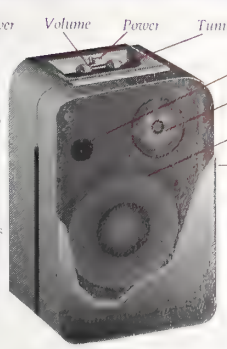
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NOTEBOOK

Adagio, ma non troppo

By Lewis H. Lapham

"The best thing for being sad," replied Merlyn, beginning to puff and blow, is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting."

—T. H. White

From Otto Friedrich I learned most of what I know about writing English prose and the better part of what I know about editing a magazine, and when he died in late April, at the age of sixty-six, a week after discovering he was sick with cancer, I owed him a letter that I had been meaning to write for nearly a year. Not a long or important letter—nothing more than a response to an apt quotation that he had sent me from one of his rereadings of *Nicholas Nickleby*—and if I had written it at once, it would have been a matter of a few sentences. The moment passed, and Otto's note disappeared into the sheaf of good intentions that takes up the greater part of the space on a desk otherwise reserved for manuscripts in need of a third revision. The longer I postponed my reply, the more formidable the task became. Not because of the difficulty of the work at hand but because it was Otto to whom I would be sending it, and Otto was not a man who looked lightly upon the written word.

Thirty years ago, in the heyday of what was then called "The New Journalism," Otto was the managing editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, and I was one of the magazine's newly recruited contract writers. When I first met him in the autumn of 1962 he seemed a remote and professorial figure—tall and heavy-set but with the stooped posture of a man accustomed to bending over books, taciturn, unsentimental, and matter-of-fact, given to wearing the same rumpled suit for days on end, not yet forty but seeming as old as Merlyn's owl. Over the course of the next five years, listening to him talk about the last months of the Roman Empire or Mozart's attachment to the key of E flat with the same degree of certainty that he brought to a discussion of the Kennedy Administration's geopolitical game theory, I understood that he joined a scholar's love of learning with a journalist's boundless curiosity. Free of cant and incapable of hypocrisy, Otto taught by example instead of by precept, patiently and with an unstinting kindness that he took a good deal of trouble to conceal behind a show of churlishness. He was as suspicious of metaphors as he was of politicians, and because he was a better writer than all but a few (a very few) of the more famous authors whose work he ushered into the light of print, I seldom quarreled with his judgment. By the time the *Post* ceased publication in the spring of 1969 I had come to recognize him as a man who summed up in his life and turn of mind what I take to be the meaning of the word "civility."

Had I answered his note about *Nicholas Nickleby* when I received it in August 1994, I might have gotten by with a few bland remarks about Dickens dressed up in the costume of a Broadway musical. By early October I had doomed myself to a more formal composition—something of sufficient worth (about Queen Victoria's gloves or the twilight of the British Empire) to excuse the lateness of my reply—and by mid-December, staring out the window at the snow, I had been reduced to waiting for the inspired arrival of twelve perfectly formed paragraphs that might meet with Otto's muttering approval. Approval, not praise. Otto never indulged a writer with the sloppy display of adjectives that he associated with publishers' blurbs and lipstick advertisements, and the best that could be hoped for was that the manuscript might pass inspection without attracting a scourge of marginal notes ("empty phrase," "wrong word," "absurdity") that indicated not only a redrafting of the text but also the jettisoning of its presumed topic.

Very early in my acquaintance with Otto, and much to the amusement of every other writer familiar with his handwriting, I conceived the ambition of one day writing an article so flawlessly constructed that it would appear in print as it had appeared in typescript. The ambition was as foolish as it was vain. Otto invariably deleted the lead paragraph ("ornamental," "pointless," "a waste of space") as well as the next three or four pages in which I had staged an elaborate introduction of

character and scene. Somewhere on page four or five he would discover the narrative line and there, impatiently pointing his pencil at a short declarative sentence uncluttered with adjectives, he would say, "Here. Begin here. With the story."

Otto loved and trusted stories. Before everything else, and notwithstanding his gifts as an editor and musician, Otto was a writer. Over the course of a life that didn't allow him much time to write, he published fourteen books, and when he died he had a list of twenty other books in mind, among them biographies of Richard Wagner, St. Paul, and Attila the Hun, a man whom he regarded as "much misunderstood, and far more worthy than his Roman enemy." Otto wrote books in the way that other people wander off into forests, chasing his intellectual enthusiasms as if they were obscure butterflies or rare mushrooms—books about roses and Eduard Manet's *Olympia,* extended essays about Scarlatti, the Albigensian Crusade, the siege of Monte Cassino and the fires of Auschwitz, books about Berlin in the 1920s and Hollywood in the 1940s, biographies of Glenn Gould and Helmuth von Moltke. An historian in the amateur tradition of Henry Adams and Bernard DeVoto, Otto wrote his books on an old manual typewriter, ignored the apparatus of academic scholarship, and approached the study of history in the same spirit that he approached Mozart's piano concertos. "The only way to understand a Mozart concerto thoroughly," he once said, "is to sit down at the piano and play it, which I do with his number twenty-seven, humbly, every six months or so."

As a boy in Concord, Massachusetts, Otto studied the violin as well as the piano, acquiring a profound respect for the key of C minor and thinking that he might become a professional pianist. But when he graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen in the spring of 1948, he had resolved upon a career as a novelist, and he departed for Europe that same summer with a typewriter, $65 in cash, and a good opinion of Henry James. In Paris he rented a room near the Luxembourg Gardens, frequented the cafés on boulevard Saint-Germain with James Baldwin, admired the sunlight on the stones of the Louvre, and discovered that there was nothing to say about Paris that hadn't already been said, if not by Balzac or François Villon, then by Edith Wharton or Coco Chanel. By September he had completed the manuscript of a novel that he submitted to the judgment of Alice B. Toklas, the famous friend of Gertrude Stein, whom he called upon without introduction at 5, rue Christine, and who, much to his surprise, offered him Armagnac and recollections of Ezra Pound. She praised his writing and informed the *New York Times* that Otto was well on his way to becoming "the important young man of the future," no small endorsement from the woman who had vouched for the genius of the young F. Scott Fitzgerald. But her sensibility was tuned, like Otto's, to a cultural tradition that lost the war. The bright dream of literary reputation faded with the American reviews of the novel in which Miss Toklas had discerned the promise of fame, and by the autumn of 1950 the need to earn a living forced Otto into journalism. Married to Priscilla Boughton and already the father of the first of five children, he found work as a copyeditor for *The Stars and Stripes* in Darmstadt, Germany, a newspaper that he despised in a country that he detested.

For the next thirty-odd years Otto paid the bills by working for various newspapers and magazines, among them *Newsweek, The Saturday Evening Post,* and *Time.* An editor by accident and a writer by design, he continued to play the music of J. S. Bach on Thursday evenings and to compose the historical studies of which he once said, "I am my books. Every sentence there is me." The sentences present the portrait of a man defined by the ferocity of his will to know—a humanist in the old, Renaissance usage of the word, connoting skepticism, wit, resourcefulness, irony, and a belief that among all the world's wonders, none is more wonderful than man.

On choosing a topic:

"I write about Scarlatti because I love to play his music, and about Monte Cassino because the sight of it moved me."

On the aesthetic of newsmagazines:

"Writing about something as though it were exciting, even though you know nothing about it, even though you are thousands of miles away, even though it is not exciting at all."

On the rubble of ancient wars:

"Bloodshed that is old enough to appear romantic is a valuable item in the tourist traffic."

On his rose garden:

"What I miss most, I think, is water. A fountain would be grand, but even that would be only a beginning. A perfect rose garden should have not just fountains but ponds and moats and waterfalls, all designed to frame or mirror the beauty of the flowers. If only I were André Malraux and had Versailles as my planting site, I might achieve something interesting."

On the uses of narrative:

"I think that history, journalism, and autobiography are all part of the same process of storytelling, of revelation and self-revelation, of bearing witness. It is the process of the Ancient Mariner clutching at the wedding guest and insisting on his story. 'There was a ship, quoth he.'"

Otto was never at a loss for a story to tell, if not about drifting ships then about earthquakes, or flowering trees, or the company of the Christian miracles gathered on the island of Iona. His life was not without sorrow—two of his children born disabled, his right eye gone blind with disease, none of his books profitable enough to release him from his chores as an editor, a siege of mental illness so severe that for a year it brought him near insanity—but like the Merlyn imagined by T. H. White, he found that the best thing for being sad was to learn something. I never once heard him complain of his misfortunes, and I suspect that he had little liking or patience for the kind of people—quite a few of them writers of large reputation—who display their afflictions as if they were made of gold.

ıce. Under circumstances nearly al-
ays unfavorable, and well versed in
ıe "trembling" of the "anatomies,"
)tto relied on the courage of his
ıind and his capacity to conceive
ıe future as a blank sheet of paper,
ever any farther away than the
ext sentence, the next diminished
eventh chord, the next verse. Be-
eving that we are all caught up in
he telling of stories (some more
omplicated and more beautiful
ıan others, many of them incoher-
nt, a few of them immortal), Otto
ssumed that no matter how well or
ow poorly we manage the plot, we
re all of us engaged in the same en-
erprise, all of us seeking evocations
r representations of what we can
ecognize as appropriately human.

He made of the same adventurous
pirit his riposte to a world "devastat-
d by evil lunatics" and the trampling
f art "in the sewers of baser minds."
Having written a book about several
f the occasions on which the world,
uite literally, came to an end—the
ack of Rome, the Black Death, the
Russian Revolution, Auschwitz—
)tto entertained few illusions about
he evil of which men were capable.
But he also knew that against the
veight of the world's superstition and
reed the best resource is the imagina-
ive labor of trying to tell the truth—
ıot because the words can reelect
Abraham Lincoln, rebuild the walls of
Troy, or restore the life of a lost child,
ut because they evoke a sense of en-
rgy and hope. Otto wasn't interested
n lies, no matter how well reviewed
n the literary press or how often re-
eated on the political talk shows,
ut from an author in whose voice he
ecognized the attempt to tell the
ruth he would listen to anything
ınd everything—to reports of four-
eenth-century marvels at Samar-
and, news of yesterday's disarma-
nent conference in London or
Geneva, explanations of the Revolu-
ion of 1848, the music criticism of
Rameau's nephew.

Delighting in the music of histo-
y, he could begin anywhere, chang-
ng the harmonies to fit the key sig-
ıatures of different centuries,
mprovising variations on a single
nelodic line. Cicero was no less real
o Otto than Boris Yeltsin or Win-
ston Churchill. Cicero's execution coincided with the failure of the Roman republic, which in turn gave rise to the empire and its eventual ruin, which prepared the arrival of the Visigoths and then the Catholic Church, which provoked the mockery of Voltaire and the idealism of the eighteenth-century philosophers from whom Jefferson derived the ideas that informed the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

The memorial service took place on the afternoon of May 24 in Saint Peter's Church on Lexington Avenue in New York City, directly across the street from the building in which *The Saturday Evening Post* once had its editorial offices. I suspect that Otto would have approved of the eulogies, especially those spoken by two of his daughters who had so well learned what they had been taught in the house on Long Island Sound that they cherished the memory of their father not with the easy adjectives sold on newsstands but with the harder eloquence of verbs and nouns. The service began with the playing of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and as I listened to the theme presenting itself in a succession of different rhythms and voices, I thought of Otto setting the libretto of human feeling to the counterpoint of time. The music shifted to an aria from Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, and I remembered that two years before going to Paris in the summer of 1948, Otto had traveled around Europe to pay his respects to various artists in whose work he had found inspiration. "Barging in on living monuments," he once said, "a tourist collecting a generation." At Rappallo in the north of Italy Otto invited himself to tea with Sir Max and Lady Beerbohm; in Rome he found George Santayana, reclining in striped pajamas on his bed at the Convent of the Blue Nuns. In Munich he briefly took piano lessons with Georg Pembauer, who was said to have been a pupil of Liszt, and on the terrace of the Grand Hotel in Lausanne, he accosted Richard Strauss, by then a bent and white-haired man of eighty-two, with the first pages of a piano concerto he had begun to write on the voyage from New York. The elderly lady accompanying the composer on his afternoon walk angrily waved Otto out of sight, never guessing what it was that Otto had come to say or that forty-nine years later, on Lexington Avenue and East 53 Street, the music of *Der Rosenkavalier* would oversee the departure of Otto's civilizing spirit.

Within the profession of journalism I often have heard it said that the truth shall make men free, but it was Otto who taught me what the phrase means. The truth isn't about the acquisition of doctrine or the assimilation of statistics, not even about the scandal in Washington or Los Angeles. It's about the courage to trust one's own thought and observation, to possess one's own history, speak in one's own voice. Stories move from truth to facts, not the other way around, but in the attempt to convey the essence of a thing, the teller of tales must give it a name, an age, and an address.

Most of Otto's books never sold more than a few thousand copies, but although he knew that the reading and writing of history settles nothing (neither the grocer's bill, the argument in the faculty lounge, nor next year's election), he also knew that the study of history is the proof of our kinship with a larger whole and a wider self, with those who have gone before and those who will come after, and that we have nothing else with which to build the future except the wreckage of the past. Time destroys all things, but from the ruin of families and empires we preserve what we find useful or beautiful or true, on our way to death we make of what we have found the hope of our immortality. History is about the passion of thought and the will to understand, about Darwin sailing for the Galápagos or Dostoevsky in trouble with the police, about Otto Friedrich, sick or in pain, blind in one eye, playing Bach's Partita in C Minor on a winter night on a piano badly out of tune, planning his next raid on the kingdom of the past, wondering how he might hearten himself and his fellow men with a story not yet told. ■



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HARPER'S INDEX

Percentage of Americans who don't know that Hiroshima was the site of the first atomic-bomb attack : 35
Percentage who believe the attack was ordered by Richard Nixon : 1
Estimated number of killings in *True Lies*, a film Bob Dole cited in March as among those "most friendly to the family" : 94
Amount of the $21,000 in contributions Bob Dole has received from Time Warner since 1987 that he plans to return : 0
Minutes of airtime C-SPAN devoted in June to a National Press Club discussion of Dole by Siskel and Ebert : 64
Number of viewers who called CBS during Connie Chung's coverage of the Oklahoma bombing to ask if Dan Rather was dead : 3
Number of the bombing victims whose families have retained the services of defense attorney Johnnie Cochran : 89
Percentage of radio-talk-show listeners who blame the "mainstream media" for the Oklahoma bombing : 15 (see page 17)
Average percentage of local-TV evening news time that is devoted to crime and disaster coverage : 53
Chances that an American household contains at least three TV sets : 1 in 4
Percentage of American adults who cannot identify the president of Mexico : 98
Average percentage change, since NAFTA went into effect, in top executive salaries at the 26 largest U.S. firms in Mexico : +29
Ratio of compensation paid AlliedSignal's CEO last year to wages the firm paid its 3,810 Mexican *maquiladora* workers : 3:2
Chances that a job in one of the ten largest industrialized countries is industrial : 1 in 4
Percentage change since 1970 in the number of Americans employed by state government : +71
Percentage change in the number employed by the federal government : +5
Rank of 1953 among years in which the largest percentage of U.S. workers were unionized : 1
Estimated change in annual federal revenues if corporations were taxed at 1953 rates : +$53,000,000,000
Percentage of contributions to the Republican National Committee since 1993 that were of $1,000 or more : 7
Percentage of contributions to the Democratic National Committee that were : 27
Number of Susan B. Anthony dollars held by the federal government : 291,000,000
Cost of storing them, per year : $30,000
Number of registered sabers in Japan : 7,723
Chances that a Japanese murder involves a gun : 1 in 77
Number of Russians injured on escalators in the Moscow Metro last year who were drunk at the time : 84
Year in which England repealed a law mandating an "orderly, proper line" at bus stops : 1995
Percentage of Britons between the ages of 11 and 14 who cannot identify Winston Churchill : 31
Percentage of the French who say "believing in God is not necessary anymore" : 32
Chances that a Catholic saint canonized since 1978 is Vietnamese : 2 in 5
Number of U.S. Army tanks the Army Corps of Engineers plans to "deploy" off Alabama's coast this year to create a reef : 100
Ratio of the amount of oil spilled near Usinsk, Russia, since last August to that spilled by the *Exxon Valdez* : 3:1
Percentage change since 1994 in the price of one minute of prime-time TV advertising in Russia : +200
Percentage change since 1992 in the circulation of *Pravda* : –85
Ratio of the price of the *Los Angeles Times* in South Central L.A. to the price in Orange County : 2:1
Number of subscribers to Call of the Wind, a California paging service that alerts windsurfers to good conditions : 450
Price of a pair of Sea Shell Headphones, made from Cowrie shells, from the Remo catalogue : $140
Price of renting a duck to compete in the annual Great American Duck Race held in Deming, New Mexico, this month : $5
Estimated number of mosquito bites required to drain all the blood from an American adult : 1,120,000
Estimated number of bug zappers required to kill all the insects in the world : 1,104,120,000,000

Figures cited are the latest available as of June 1995. Sources are listed on page 76.
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[illegible]

READINGS

[Epilogue]

LACKING ALL CONVICTION

From "Look Over Your Shoulder," by Christopher Hitchens, in the May 25 issue of the London Review of Books. *Hitchens is the author, most recently, of* For the Sake of Argument.

The moment is slipping by in which political lessons are likely to be learned from the Oklahoma atrocity. Now the language of therapy and recovery is kicking in, if anything so bland and superficial can be said to have any kick at all. The words "fascist" and "racist" are never employed—perhaps from some exaggerated anxiety about political correctness. In their place, we have trauma-management seminars, and the rebarbative spectacle of the Clintons at the White House, pictured with a flock of tots, and speaking earnestly about how children shouldn't be afraid to go to school. I can picture a few wolfish smiles among the bombing's perpetrators at this response: not a bad return of respect and fear for the investment of one fertilizer bomb device.

An especially irritating trope, invariably offered at times like this, is the stress on the "loss of American innocence." How desirable is innocence as a condition anyway? And why is it so easy to regain, only to be "lost" once more? How one yearns for just one moment that is not clotted with euphemism and sentimentality; one moment when someone in public life would call for a fight back, and apply to these ostensibly "libertarian" movements their true name.

Instead, for some grotesque reason, we had Yeats week in the Oval Office. To close his solemn speech at the White House Correspondents' Dinner in April, Clinton quoted W. H. Auden's valediction to Yeats: "In the deserts of the heart/Let the healing fountains start." The mere word "healing," presumably discovered through a computer keyword search, had evidently been enough to recommend this otherwise completely inapposite verse. Then I got a call.

"Hi. George Stephanopoulos thought you would know where that line about 'the centre cannot hold' comes from." As a result, I had the vaguely surreal experience of calling the White House back and, George being absent, of reciting the first verse of Yeats's "The Second Coming" over the telephone. The secretary's computer clacked oddly as I spelled and explained "gyre," and picked up a bit more speed when we got to "things fall apart." The repetition of "loosed" after "blood-dimmed tide" gave some difficulty, and then with a sinking feeling I heard my own voice saying, "The ceremony of innocence is drowned." If they pick that bit for the next speech, I realized, it'll be partly my fault. So I gave special stress to the closing staves about how the best lack all conviction, while the worst—

"Will he know what this is about?" the secretary inquired, as if she were deploying all-



From Machine Gun Fun, *a series of photographs by David Graham, taken at the North Country Summer Machine Gun Shoot, a recreational shoot event held twice a year in Stratford Hollow, New Hampshire. Participants attack their targets —abandoned cars, refrigerators, and bowling pins— with weapons including machine guns, rifles, and a tank. The man pictured above has just torched the car behind him with a flamethrower. A selection of Graham's photographs were on display this spring at the Allentown Art Museum in Allentown, Pennsylvania.*

American politeness on a slightly questionable but nonetheless registered voter.

"Yes, he will. It's a poem he asked for."

"A *poem?* Did you write it?"

[Account]

MARTA AND HELENA

From "Golden Kids Comeback," by Timothy Garton Ash, in issue number 50 of Granta. *Ash is the author of* The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague.

It's November 1994, and we're at the Lucerna Palace in Prague, built by a millionaire architect/developer in the early years of this century, expropriated by the Communists, but now returned to his sons, Ivan and Václav Havel. Tonight's guest stars are the Golden Kids, a Sixties pop group who haven't performed together for nearly twenty-five years, since they were banned by the Communist authorities after the Soviet invasion. They are Marta Kubišová, now aged fifty-three; Václav Neckář, fifty-two; and Helena Vondráčková, forty-seven. They wear black. They jive. They sing "Hey Jude" and "Massachusetts" and "The Times They Are A-Changin'" and "The Mighty Quinn," and even, God save us, "Congratulations."

The audience, like the Golden Kids, is middle-aged: men in sheeny suits, white shirts, and ties, women in blouses, as if for the opera. They sweat amid the faded Jugendstil gilding and candelabra. Sometimes they clap along. But when the Golden Kids sing "Suzanne," there's just total silence:

Suzanne takes you down
To her place near the river
You can hear the boats go by
You can spend the night beside her . . .

Tense and heavy with regret: the silence of the middle-aged remembering sex.

There's another story being played out onstage this evening: the story of Marta and Helena. Marta Kubišová was a Czech heroine of '68. A song called "Hymn for Marta" became a rallying song of the time. After the Soviet invasion, she was banned. For twenty long years, until 1989, she did odd jobs, worked as a clerk, had close friends among the dissidents. In the middle of the Velvet Revolution she made her first comeback—a moment at once rapturous and terribly sad. Barely able to sing due to the engulfing emotion, she whispered into the microphone: "*Casy se mění*" ("The times they are a-changin'").

Helena Vondráčková took a quite different path after 1969. She went on performing and was seen often on television. She collaborated.

Now their paths have met again. Will virtue have its reward? Or does none of that matter anymore? Helena, tall, blonde, and still very much in practice, seems to dominate at first. She's younger, more professional, and the audience knows her from television. Perhaps they even feel a little easier with her, for most of them collaborated, too, or at least made their little compromises to keep jobs. Marta, black-haired, older, shorter, is a shade slower, and you feel the nervousness in her voice.

But somewhere in the middle of the evening, the emotion begins flowing toward her. People bring bouquets of flowers up onstage after every number (opera habits), and the flower count is going Marta's way. Then the whole concert stops, and the stage is suddenly full of embarrassed men in suits. They represent Supraphon, Fiat, Interbanka, Seagram—the commercial sponsors of the evening. Awkwardly, they hand out platinum discs and bottles of champagne. And there's a raffle: first prize, a Fiat Punto. The prizewinners come up onstage, say a few words into the mike, and kiss the stars.

One, a comfortable-looking man in jeans, shambles up and says he'd like to thank all the performers, every one, "but above all, above all, Mrs. Kubišová." And we all applaud loud and long, and we all know what he's thanking her for, and it's not for her singing this evening, it's for her twenty years of silence. And now everyone is sweating, and everything is mixed up together, the Marta of then and the "Mrs. Kubišová" of now, the pop heroes of the Sixties and the business heroes of the Nineties, the memories of sex and the memories of national protest, and today's hope of a Fiat Punto.

Yet there's an even bigger circle closing here: a European circle. For these are also our songs: this is our past. Sixty-eight was one of those very rare moments when the experiences of people in Western and Eastern Europe really did meet. For all the differences between Prague and Paris, Liverpool and Leipzig, people under thirty here and there moved to the same rhythm, sang the same lyrics, shared something of the same protest, the same emancipation. Then the Russian tanks rolled in, and the paths of experience diverged, like those of Marta and Helena, and the years slipped away.

Now a quarter-century on, East and West have come together again, like Marta and Helena, here in the Havels' Lucerna Palace, in this postmodern stew of middle-aged longing and regret, under the sign of Seagram, and the shared meaning of history is:

Yeh yeh yeh yeh yeh yeh yeh da da da da
Hey Jude.

[Chart]

TALK RADIO'S BLAME INDEX

From a survey of hosts and producers of radio talk shows, taken during the three weeks following the Oklahoma City bombing in April, that appeared in the May issue of Talkers Magazine, *published in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Respondents were asked who or what their call-in listeners blamed for the bombing.*

THE CALLERS BLAME

The Bombers Themselves	18%
Mainstream Media	15%
Breakdown of Values	14%
FBI/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms	13%
Bill Clinton/Janet Reno/ The Federal Government	12%
Militia Movement	8%
Talk Radio	7%
Conservative Movement	6%
Angry White Men	5%
Everyone	2%

[Exegesis]

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

From the exhibition notes for the "Coalbin Wall," a mural by B. Redd Smith on permanent display at the Conspiracy Museum in Dallas. The mural, which is 108 feet long, illustrates the museum's theory that various assassinations and mysterious deaths in recent American history are interconnected. Smith, a Dallas artist, used Chinese painting techniques to create the mural because "the oriental brush stroke . . . best depicts the violence in an assassin's bullet as well as the peace in a simple landscape."

1. Old Man Sitting Under Plum Tree. The old man represents assassinologists who have studied, researched, and long contemplated the mystery of the assassinations depicted here. The tree's blossoms represent pearls of wisdom, the reward of old age.



2. Brush-stroke interpretation of the assassination of JFK.

3. Capitol Building. The Capitol Building alludes to the government's involvement in the JFK assassination and cover-up. The Three Dancing Men are the Warren Commission giving us a song and dance.

4. Brush-stroke interpretation of the Single Bullet Theory (SBT).

5. Buzzards in a Tree. The buzzards represent the Professional War Machine. Buzzards live on the flesh of others. The peaceful scene in the distance shows that the populace is completely unaware of the buzzards' intent and of their plans for executions.

The little bird sitting on a branch is looking at the SBT while trying to balance himself in the hot air—or is he dodging those bullets not mentioned in the SBT?

6. Brush-stroke interpretation of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

7. Cranes. The cranes represent long life and prosperity, and are shown here as a counterpoint to the shortened lives of the assassinated. Note that even the cranes have an agenda—one has his eye on the defenseless frog hiding in the grass.

8. Brush-stroke interpretation of the assassination of Mary Jo Kopechne.

9. The Hawk and Cliffs. The rocks and mountains symbolize truth as immovable, unchangeable, and solid. The hawk represents the predator, the hunter, the assassin.

10. Brush-stroke interpretation of the explosion of Korean Airlines Flight 007.

11. Three Men. The man behind the tree is known in oriental folklore as the demon queller. Here he is about to kill two demon assassins who are finishing a picnic as they examine a diagram of the explosion of Korean Airlines Flight 007. The assassins' garments have no openings for their hands: they never get their hands dirty and always have others do their dirty work.

12. Brush-stroke interpretation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations' Report.

13. Waterfall Area. This peaceful scene symbolizes the museum's hope for peace and quiet after the truth is known and the cover-up is unmasked.

[Legal Opinion]

THE TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

From Judge Charles S. Haight's ruling in Tyler *v.* Carter, *a civil case filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. The ruling appeared last year in* Federal Rules Decisions, *an annual listing of federal district court rulings published by West Publishing Company.*

Plaintiff filed a complaint alleging a conspiracy to enslave and oppress certain segments of our society. Plaintiff contends she is a cyborg, and that she received most of the information which forms the basis for her complaint through "proteus," which I read to be some silent, telepathic form of communication.

Presently before the Court is an Order to Show Cause why the Court should not enjoin the trial in the World Trade Center bombing case. Plaintiff alleges that President Clinton ordered the bombing of the World Trade Center in order to justify war with Iraq. In support of her application, plaintiff describes certain "proteus" communications she has had with other individuals. Plaintiff alleges that the United States invaded Panama and arrested General Noriega because Noriega objected to United States soldiers raiding Indian tribes in Central America for child sex slaves to torture in American cocaine-based thrill-killing rackets. Plaintiff contends she wrote to Noriega



From OJ: The People Have Spoken, *a series of photographs by Gregg Segal. In order to give Los Angeles residents a "chance to play their part in the drama" of the O.J. Simpson trial, Segal went to various locations around the city, including the Santa Monica pier, Hollywood Boulevard, and the Magic Castle miniature golf course in North Hollywood, and interviewed people about the case. He then wrote an excerpt from each interview on a piece of posterboard, and asked his subjects to pose with their comments. Segal's photographs appeared in the March 24 issue of the* L.A. Reader.

asking him to join in her lawsuit but that United States soldiers holding Noriega beat him when he asked for his mail.

Plaintiff asserts that in 1988, Rajiv Gandhi spoke to her through "proteus" and informed her that he was being held prisoner and sexually abused by a man whom he had caught stealing from the funds generated by the Bhopal disaster settlement. According to plaintiff, Yasir Arafat tried to confirm Gandhi's tale of abuse on behalf of the plaintiff, to no avail.

Plaintiff additionally contends that the Gulf War was undertaken so that America could restock its sexual slavery camps, which had been depleted. According to plaintiff, 40,000 Iraqi soldiers captured by the United States and selected for their physical attractiveness have been brought to this country, "beaten, forced to run gauntlets, and homosexually gang-raped by American soldiers." Plaintiff claims to have confronted former Secretary of Defense Cheney with evidence of this allegation. Cheney, through "proteus," purportedly told the plaintiff, "Well, we were so sick and tired of killing black girls. We just had to put some variety back into our death-hunting industry. And they (Persians) are incredibly beautiful. The beauty of the face heightens the pleasure of the kill. I know of no higher pleasure than the gang-rape of exceedingly beautiful people."

Additionally, plaintiff alleges that the Serbian government, the "Nazi Bund," the Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI), and IBM are also involved in the conspiracy. Representatives of both IBM and BCCI made an appearance and successfully moved to have the claims against them dismissed.

The Clerk of the Court is directed to dismiss the complaint as to all defendants. The Clerk is directed to refund to plaintiff her filing fee. Plaintiff's motion by Order to Show Cause to enjoin the World Trade Center bombing trial is denied.

It is so ordered.

[Essay]

THE HIDDEN POWER OF ENVY

From "Envy," by Robert Coles, in the May issue of New Oxford Review. *Coles is a practicing psychiatrist and a professor of psychology at Harvard University.*

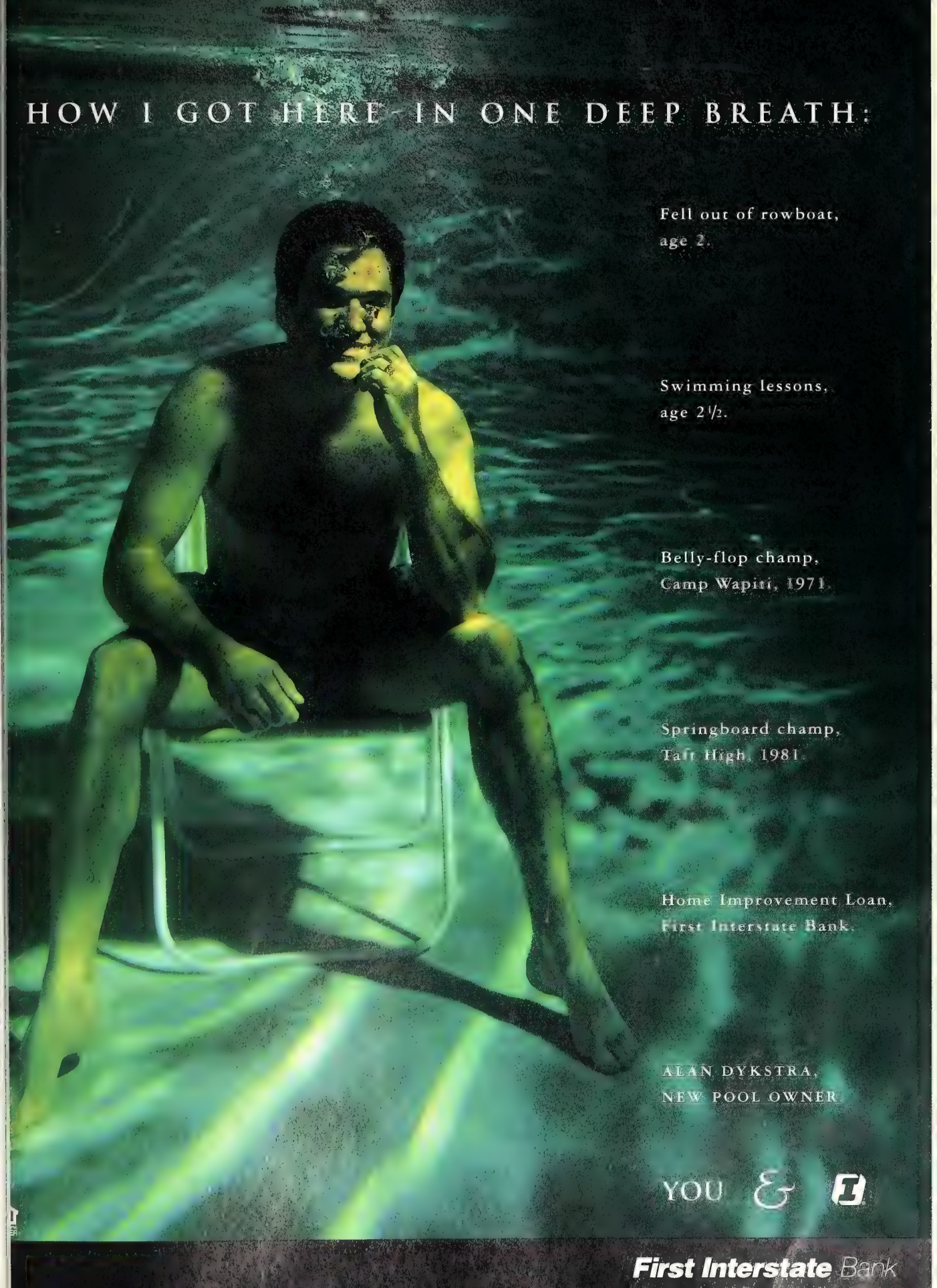
When Freud listened to his first patients, he observed their substantial difficulty in coming to terms with their sexual thoughts and impulses. He began to realize that this aspect of their lives was hidden not only from those who might want to be of help to them but from the patients themselves. So it was that the unconscious—thoroughly familiar to novelists, poets, and playwrights over the centuries—took on new life as a construct in the psychiatrist's metapsychology, a construct derived not from the reveries of a theorist but from a practitioner's daily clinical effort to understand his patients.

Today's psychiatrists and psychoanalysts no longer have to wait long, or probe persistently, to learn about what Freud called Eros, as it lives in our particular patients. These days, the men and women—even the children—who come to see us are ready to share their every sexual thought, fantasy, and impulse. They are late-twentieth-century Americans who have watched the talk shows (with their chief staple, confessional sex), gone to the movies, picked up periodicals and the daily paper, glimpsed billboards, and raced through best-sellers, and thereby learned what is not only acceptable but desirable—to the extent that I once heard a monogamous man in his thirties wonder what was wrong with him: He found himself attracted *only* to his wife, and he was appalled by what he saw on television and at the movies. Was he some odd variant of a prude, a puritan? Was he "repressed," abnormally so? His colleagues in the law firm to which he belonged horsed around all the time, making mention of this or that sex scene they'd thoroughly enjoyed seeing on television or in a magazine. They also had a constant supply of jokes to share, all sexual in nature. Why, he kept asking himself, as they gabbed and guffawed, did he feel left out, even disgusted? He had come to see me because he felt restless, at times quite anxious. On occasion a spell of insomnia visited him, apparently out of nowhere: all seemed well, yet he tossed and turned through the whole night. He worried that he had some "hidden psychological problem" because of the animus he felt toward his fellow lawyers at the firm. Eager to get to the bottom of things, he identified his "asceticism" (as he called it) as a symptom of sorts—sexual inhibition as an obvious sign of mental and emotional abnormality.

I knew, upon hearing this kind of self-addressed inquiry, to suggest that we table the matter and move on, try to figure out why *else* those colleagues might bother him, apart from their constantly articulated sexuality. Instead of asking this man about his sexual life, which was for him and his wife quite fulfilling, I asked him about his working life. I kept trying to learn about those lawyers, their achievements and attainments and, most of all, their daily activities and responsibilities as attorneys who belonged to a big-shot enterprise, one well connected to a host of businesses and well-to-do individuals.

Gradually I began to realize that those colleagues bothered my patient in ways other than he fully realized—the modern unconscious exerting itself, all right, but not, ironically, in the service of the sexual repression he speculated to be at work. The more I heard him talk of this repression—always, it seemed, in connection with his "law partners"—the more I wondered (to myself, at first, and later aloud, in conversation with him) whether those men, with whom he had his morning coffee, lunches, and after-work drinks, didn't present another kind of concern for him, or perhaps even a threat. He had gone to a small Midwestern college of Lutheran affiliation and had done reasonably well, but he had been unsure of his future throughout the four years he spent there. Upon graduation he joined the Peace Corps, spent two years in Sri Lanka, and returned home still at a loss as to how (and where) he wanted to spend the rest of his life. "On a lark," he told me, he took the GRE and the LSAT, and, much to his surprise, he did brilliantly on both. He had never before contemplated a career in law, but he now applied to and was accepted at several fancy Ivy League schools. He did very well at the school of his choice, and the rest was predictable: first-rate summer jobs in "top-notch" firms; a valued clerkship with a federal judge; invitations galore to join various groups of lawyers; and then a decision to "go for the top," join one of the big firms, and settle into the comfortable suburban life that followed. His wife, he let me know in a casual aside, had been a legal secretary for several years: "She didn't go to college, the way all of their wives did."

It was upon hearing that comment, which the teller felt to be quite beside the point, that I began to approach what I was beginning to understand as the heart of the matter: a knowing, nagging sense of vulnerability that this


HOW I GOT HERE IN ONE DEEP BREATH:
Fell out of rowboat, age 2.
Swimming lessons, age 2½.
Belly-flop champ, Camp Wapiti, 1971.
Springboard champ, Taft High, 1981.
Home Improvement Loan, First Interstate Bank.
ALAN DYKSTRA, NEW POOL OWNER.
YOU & 1
First Interstate Bank



"The Cell of Envy," a scene in The Seven Deadly Sins, *a multiroom diorama built by Aaron Cullars on a one-inch-to-one-foot scale.* The Seven Deadly Sins *appeared in the June issue of* Nutshell News, *a magazine "for creators and collectors of scale miniatures," published in Waukesha, Wisconsin. In an interview accompanying the photos, Cullars, a Schaumburg, Illinois, artist, explained that he created the house of "interconnected" sins because "we all live here at some time." The seated doll in the room above represents a character who "wanted everything her friends had, and so she accumulated [furnishings and clothing]—but it wasn't her, and she was miserable. Now she's taken her own life." The dead woman has left a suicide note for her friend, represented by the standing doll; it reads, in part: "I suppose that it was easier to try and be like you rather than seek to find out who or what I really was."*

bright, dedicated, and accomplished man felt when in the company of his colleagues. True, he had come far, but in his mind his colleagues were always "on another plane." When I asked about the characteristics of that high plane, he was good at listing variables (family backgrounds, fancy colleges, big legal victories, vacation spots) but not forthcoming about how all this registered in his heart or, as the banal phrase of our time goes, "how he felt about it." Then one day, finding myself challenged by a long stubborn silence that had taken place, I began to talk about some thoughts that sometimes crossed my mind, and the rivalries, resentments, and envies that informed these thoughts. When I was through (and thereupon worried, since the silence continued, that I'd made a mistake going on for so long), I was about ready to end the session. Suddenly, though, my eyes, not my ears, were clinically alerted to something: a handkerchief taken out of a pocket, a few tears wiped away, legs crossed and uncrossed and crossed again.

How hard it was for this person to know about, much less talk about, such matters! How quick he had been, long before he and I had arrived at our moment of psychological candor, to concentrate on sexuality. How deeply ashamed of himself he felt as he began to speak of envy. He would prefer, any day, he eventually told me, to uncover some sexual impulse he'd kept deeply under wraps. As we aired such personal thoughts and attitudes (a lack of this or that in ourselves, the mighty presence of this or that in various others), we both acknowledged envy as no small part of our day-to-day existence. One afternoon, my lawyer friend wondered aloud at great length about envy: How common is it, and is it "wrong—oh, excuse me—is it abnormal?" And if so, how does one get rid of it?

A long story, that one. I would eventually

say, in the course of our exchanges, that it is my suspicion that even Freud, like the two of us, may have found it easier to explore and discuss his sexuality, not to mention that of others, than the envy he undoubtedly felt now and then; that this envy comes naturally to us, since we are all limited in our distinctive ways, and so others, limited in their own ways, can seem so strong, so lucky, so blessed; that we are bombarded so heavily in this secular world with invitations, suggestions, possibilities, and promises that we are bound to feel inadequate in their weighty presence, as we see them given life in others. Hence our wish to *be* those envied others, our shame at abandoning ourselves that way, our anger that such has come to pass. I would also remark that envy is part of our humanity, something that cannot be altogether banished (not by will, obviously, but not by clever psychological interpretations, either). And if envy brings the pain of knowing what we lack, envy can also lead us to reflection. Envious, we find ourselves asking the most important psychological questions: who we really are, and what we really want out of life. Envy can be part of our redemption.

[Anecdote]

THE EIGHTIES: A REMINISCENCE

From "A Sprocket in Satan's Bulldozer: Confessions of an Investment Banker," by Ted Rall, in issue number 6 of Might, *a bimonthly published in San Francisco. Rall worked at the New York City branch of the Industrial Bank of Japan from 1986 to 1990. He is now a cartoonist.*

In early 1986, one of our clients, Mitsui Real Estate Ltd., expressed interest in purchasing the Exxon Building in Manhattan. Mitsui asked us to contact Exxon and find out how much they wanted. Exxon's asking price of $375 million for the 1970s-style building seemed high to us, and we knew that Exxon was hot to sell. We relayed the price to Mitsui and told them that Exxon would probably accept a lower offer.

A few weeks later Mitsui called to say that they wanted to offer Exxon $610 million.

Neither my boss nor I could believe it. We prodded our rep at Mitsui for information, and he finally admitted their reason for deliberately overpaying by $235 million: "Our president read that the current record price paid for a single building, as listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, is $600 million. He wants to beat the record."

Exxon's lawyers were perplexed. "Look, just pay us the asking price of $375 million, and everything'll be fine. We can't accept more than the asking price—the regulators will think you're bribing us."

Mitsui insisted: they would pay $610 million or nothing at all. Why not $600,000,001? Because the record breaker had to look good. That extra ten million would be for appearance—as was, in fact, the whole deal. How about a more expensive building? No, this one had the right location.

Exxon almost turned down the money, but then their lawyers came through: "If Mitsui can get us an opinion stating that it is legal to overpay to this extreme extent, we will consent to accepting the offer."

A half hour before Mitsui's president was supposed to sign the contracts, my boss and I

[Notice]

THE NEW ME

From a statement issued in May by Bushwick Bill, a solo rap artist and a member of the Geto Boys, announcing a change in his stage name.

My former name was Bushwick Motherfucking Bill. I had to upgrade it to show some expansion and to show everybody who the biggest Geto Boy of all is. My new name is Dr. Wolfgang Von Bushwickin the Barbarian Mother Funky Stay High Dollar Billstir.

I call myself "Doctor" because doctors must be precise when they execute their job. The "Wolfgang" is because, on the cool, I'm into classical music, and my favorite artist is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. "Bushwickin" has to do with me being a father now and producing my own next of kin. So now I'm reproductive both verbally and physically. "The Barbarian" is to show that I still have the mind of a lunatic and that nothing's changed as far as me coming hard-core rough and rugged. "Mother Funky Stay High" is a manifestation of the aftermath of chronic-izm. "Dollar Bill" is because I'm currently currency in the United States and abroad. Finally, "stir" is on the end because when I kick shit I always manage to stir something up.

BOOKSHELF



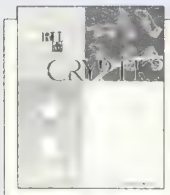
THE AMERICAN RELIGION

Harold Bloom identifies the American religion as a variation on Gnosticism: we are Americanized Gnostics, believers in a pre-Christian tradition of individual divinity. Bloom explores the varieties of religions that have grown on American soil. **Cloth, $10.00.**



AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FACE

Based on Lucy Grealy's article "Mirrorings," published in *Harper's*. Describes the struggle of a young woman coming to terms with her appearance, in a beauty-obsessed society, after childhood surgery left her face badly disfigured. **Cloth, $19.95.**



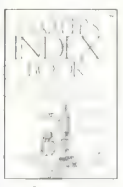
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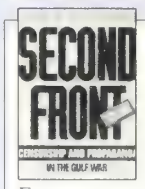
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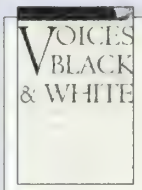
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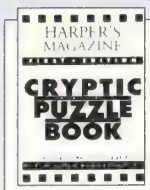
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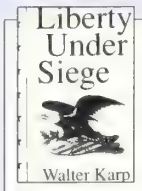
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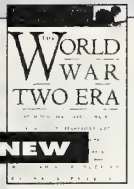
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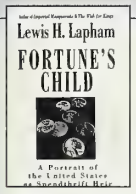
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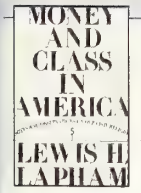
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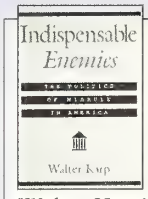


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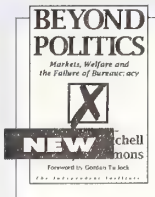
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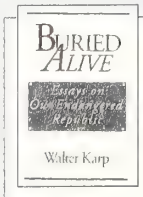
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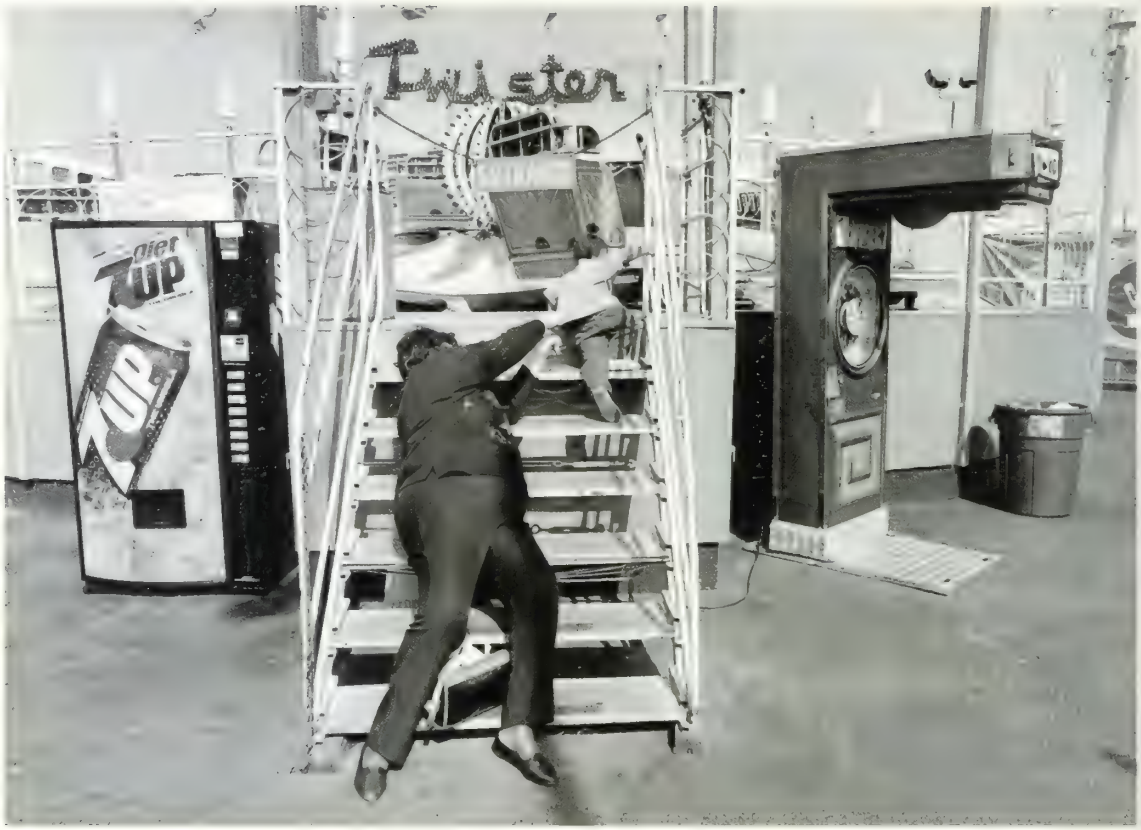
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This photograph, by James Hamilton, appeared in the May 1 issue of The New York Observer. *The photo was taken in April at Coney Island, in New York City.*

sat down with him to argue. We presented our research.

"It isn't necessary to go through with this. If it's publicity you're looking for, there are better ways. We could put Mitsui's name on every billboard in America for a year. The ad agencies would be thrilled. We called the New York City Board of Education: that money would bring the facilities at every public school in all five boroughs up to current standards. The press would be huge! Isn't that better than some listing in the *Guinness Book*?"

This clearly wasn't registering.

"The City says they can build apartment units for homeless people at $10,000 a pop. That's twenty-five thousand people off the streets—the Coalition for the Homeless says there's only forty thousand in the whole city! Think about it—'Mitsui virtually eliminates poverty in New York City!' "

He listened politely as we pleaded for his quarter-billion. Then he left to sign the papers. We went back to our offices. I've never felt so dirty.

[Professional Advice]

ANOTHER NORMAN ROCKWELL MOMENT

From "Incorrigible Children," in Juvenile Dentistry, *a textbook by Dr. Walter C. McBride, published in 1941. An excerpt from the book appeared in issue number 12 of* Chip's Closet Cleaner, *a 'zine published in Chicago by Chip Rowe.*

A child who is incorrigible, with the proverbial "chip on his shoulder," who will not open his mouth and who makes drastic expostulations, must necessarily be dealt with alone. The parent must be excused. It takes but a few moments alone to convince this type of patient that he will do just as you dictate—the work will be done pleasantly or unpleasantly, just as he chooses. Every child of this temperament, if he is convinced by your attitude that you mean business, responds at once. It is merely a matter of "calling his bluff."

A girl of eight was referred to me by a dentist who had had her in his office four times. There she had consented to getting in the chair for rides up and down but not for examination. In my reception room the mother was given a free hand in inducing the child to come to the operating room, to no avail. When the mother had exhausted all her possibilities, I appeared and remarked, "What's the trouble?" The child was sprawled in a big chair with one foot on the floor and the other up in the air, pointed at me. She remarked rebelliously, "If you come near me I'll kick you." She was promptly picked up bodily and hurried into the operating room amid a few kicks and verbal rebuffs, and seated (thrust) in the chair with a gesture indicative of action and intent and this remark: "In my office I'll tell you what's going to be done. Now you sit there and let's not hear a word from you. I'll tell you what to do. Open your mouth and let's see your teeth." The child was so amazed at my audacity that she was completely deflated. There was no resistance whatsoever to any remark or command thereafter, and she proved an excellent patient.

At times, in his practice, to break down the iron will of an incorrigible patient, the author has resorted to the towel procedure. It is drastic, but "the spirit must be conquered before the flesh can be subdued." The mother must necessarily be excused, and, as she leaves the room, the latch should be turned on the door—otherwise, she will be back at the crucial moment and destroy all that has been accomplished.

To proceed, take a towel in your left hand. Put that arm around the headrest, placing the towel over the child's mouth while holding his two hands in your right hand, which is also pressed down against the body, holding him firmly in the chair. Talk directly into his ear, saying, "As soon as you stop crying, I will let go." If, after a minute or two, no response is given, close the thumb and finger of the towel hand over the nose, shutting off the air supply. In a few seconds he will exhibit symptoms of reasoning and will agree to submit, but the moment the hand is released he will yell loudly for his mother. Immediately replace the towel and proceed again. This time pay no attention to the initial overtures, and hold him until he experiences some discomfort. Prior to releasing him say, "Will you help? Are you sure? Are you sure? Sure?" This time when he agrees to cooperate he will be as good as his word, and the crying will be but momentary. Immediately take the mirror and, in a gruff tone, remark, "Now open your mouth and let me look at your teeth." Almost before the child realizes it, the mouth will open like a

[Questions]

IT'S 1995. DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR CHILDREN ARE?

From a list of questions for parents whose children use computers, compiled by Dr. Peter S. Tippett, director of the Computer Ethics Institute in Santa Monica, California. The questions are posted on CompuServe, a commercial on-line service, as part of an ongoing campaign sponsored by the Institute and the National Computer Security Association to limit "unethical and irresponsible use of information technology."

TEN QUESTIONS PARENTS SHOULD ASK THEIR CHILDREN

1. Do you ever connect your computer to a telephone or otherwise use a network? Do you use e-mail (electronic mail)? Do you use a modem?

2. Do you legitimately own all of the software, games, and programs you have or use? Where are the manuals, boxes, and license agreements for these programs?

3. Where did the contents of your homework come from? If you copied text and images from another source, did you get permission?

4. Do you ever use other people's computers or look at or copy their files without their knowledge or permission?

5. Do you use telephone, video, cable TV, computer networks, bulletin boards, or other network services without paying for them?

6. Do you have any newsletters, plans, guidelines, or "how-to" files or documents about making bombs, breaking into systems, stealing computer access, or stealing passwords?

7. Do you have any prank programs, computer viruses, worms, Trojan horse programs, or other malicious software? Do you use bulletin boards or systems that contain these things, or do you have friends or acquaintances who do?

8. Who do you associate with when you use the net?

9. Do you have any computer graphics files that you would be embarrassed about? Are they things you would be comfortable showing me? Showing your grandmother?

10. Do you ever use an assumed name, a handle, or an alias instead of your real name? What are you trying to hide by not using your real name? Are you trying to pretend to be something or someone you're not?

trap suddenly sprung, and one may proceed with the examination. The rest is easy.

It is recognized that there is a great deal of criticism of this so-called manhandling procedure. However, the reader must bear in mind that it is only the very rare child who must be treated in this manner; it does not occur with greater frequency than once or twice a month. Certainly it is not a pleasant thing to do, yet when a child has a history of having created an embarrassing scene in three or four different offices, it is necessary if anything is to be accomplished. It should be a means of last resort, the last card in the operator's deck of possibilities.

[Essay]

THEORY'S BATTLE AGAINST THE POETS

Adapted from Literature Against Philosophy, Plato to Derrida, *by Mark Edmundson, published by Cambridge University Press. Edmundson teaches English at the University of Virginia and is a contributing editor to* Harper's Magazine.

It has been twenty years since the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* set off the boom in literary theory, the full effects of which are only now becoming apparent. Whether or not most of us have actually read a word of Derrida, or of Paul de Man, Michel Foucault, or Fredric Jameson, our collective sense of what art is and does has been dramatically altered by their work.

The aim of what has, rather grandly, come to be called "theory" is the skeptical interrogation of various cultural forms—history writing, legal discourse, advertising imagery, and, perhaps most significantly, art. Over the past two decades, theorists have sought to reveal art's long-suppressed kinship with propaganda, pornography, and the language of imperial oppression. Seen in theory's bleaching light, great poets no longer appear as ideals of wisdom or of human triumph against the odds. Now they're to be approached as shrewd deceivers: tour guides to dreamy, detached lotus worlds, apologists for race and gender oppression, bagmen for the bourgeoisie. Current criticism, under the rubric of cultural studies, has continued the trend. Today's professorial commentators on literature—or film or rock or hip-hop—assume the truth of high theory without feeling a need to argue for it. And as the various purported mystifications of popular culture fall under theory's skeptical beam, practitioners savor a sense of rebellion, of old laws broken and new freedoms won.

But before theory's triumph is complete, we ought to back up and see the battle between poetry and the professors in a larger historical context. When we do, it becomes clear that theory isn't the unprecedented intellectual revolution that its proponents often assume. Rather, it's an installment in a struggle that's as old as Western culture itself—the struggle between the philosophers and the poets that Plato, in the fourth century B.C., said was already ancient.

To Plato, the poets were a band of deceivers. They offered illusions, mere imitations of imitations, whereas life's highest purpose is to seek eternal truths. For his own part, Plato claimed to offer access to concepts that could help one to live a better life. Through philosophical conversation, you approach pure knowledge of the Good, the True, the Beautiful. Conversely, the knowledge that you glean from reading literature is messy, undefined, without focus. You may encounter numerous instances of just action in Homer, but by simply reading Homer you'll never find out what all those instances have in common: you'll never make the step from anecdotal to general knowledge, never become a philosopher.

Until the theory boom, literary critics provided a third element in the poet/philosopher debate. Responsive to both art and intellection, critics from Aristotle to Virginia Woolf effectively defended poetry, not only from popular indifference but from dismissive philosophy. With the onset of theory, the critical contingency is fast disappearing. There are now plenty of poets and no end of philosopher/theorists, but art's public defenders, writers whose first allegiance is to the aesthetic experiences that have shaped them, are becoming ever more rare.

What instruction did the theorists offer in place of that defense? From Jacques Derrida one learned to see that the poet created mesmerizing visual images that disarm the reader's critical faculties. The deconstructionists could dissolve sensuous literary images—Wordsworth's daffodil field, Keats's gorgeously personified Autumn, Crane's arching bridge—back into interpretable words, putting intellect in control and bringing an end to awe. Marxist critics like Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton taught how subtly literary works insinuate ruling-class values. Michel Foucault gave the New Historicists ways to show how Shakespeare, the supposedly liberating playwright, spawns political subversion in his plays, then



"Florida, Missouri—Population: 2," from Our Smallest Towns: Big Falls, Blue Eye, Bonanza & Beyond, *a collection of photographs by Dennis Kitchen, published by Chronicle Books. To create the book, Kitchen traveled to the smallest town in each state and took a group photograph of its inhabitants. The portrait above is of Floyd Rouse and his mother, Blanche, who together make up the entire population of Florida, Missouri, the birthplace of Mark Twain. Kitchen interviewed some of the residents of each town; Floyd Rouse's comments were as follows: "I can say for sure that Florida is growing. Maybe not in population—Mother and I have been the only ones here for years—but as far as the tourist trade and Mark Twain Lake development goes, there's been a lot of progress. To the best of my knowledge, there's no local government, no mayor, no town board. Everything's taken care of around here by the state, the county, or the Mark Twain Park. We've had our trailer up for sale about three years now. We've lived here the past twenty years or so and it's time to move on. We want to live closer to the hospital. Plus, living out here puts us farther away from the kids, and we'd like to be closer to them. They live down in Mexico. Not the country, the town: Mexico, Missouri."*

subtly discredits the revolutionary energies he's released, making his world (and ours) safer for the status quo. What theory says, in the most sophisticated possible ways, is that the poets lie.

The theoretical critic of today continues, with high-tech conceptual instruments, Plato's philosophical quarrel against the poets. A feminist deconstructor, though she may hold her appointment in the department of English, is on the philosophers' side in the ancient quarrel. She thinks it better for people to be educated by the strong and consistent moral ideas offered by one or another philosophy than to risk being led astray by the unregulated profusion of stories and metaphors that literature offers. To encourage students to focus on images of women, on ocular metaphors, on Oedipal rivalries between male authors, on any overriding theme, is to rein in their freedom to find diverse meanings, meanings that might not be, by the instructor's lights, satisfyingly moral.

However brilliant they were, Plato, Kant, Hegel, and the philosophical disenfranchisers allied with them didn't have much hope of evicting literature from its culturally central role. Theory does. With theory, the philosophers may win their battle against the poets once and for all. If they do, they will substantially put an end to the culture of criticism that has championed poetry ever since Aristotle wrote the *Poetics* to defend dramatic art against his teacher, Plato. Philosophy's victory is likely (though not inevitable), I believe, because recent developments, both intellectual and material, have given it fresh resources to press its claims.

First, there is Freud. The work of Sigmund Freud and his followers did more to shift power in the war between the poets and the philosophers than any other single event. Deploying Freud's theory of the unconscious, you can supposedly get to the repressed origins of the work at hand. You are suddenly in a position to say things about the poem that the author could not. The critic now can preside as the authority, taking up the role of analyst to patient, finding motives for the poem that were beyond the ken of the pre-Freudian cultural world.

Then there is the professionalization of literary studies. Criticism now emanates chiefly from universities, which is to say that it must be taught. And philosophical theory—as opposed to responsive, impressionistic criticism—is an eminently teachable discipline. Many of the great philosophers were also great teachers. They had something to hand on: concepts, categories, imperatives, structures of

argument. But a more artistic criticism, the kind that reacts to the particularity of an individual work rather than to how it might be related to a general system, is not so easy to teach. Metaphor making, says Aristotle, is a sign of genius, and cannot be learned from others. You can teach an intelligent student to do what a philosophical critic like Paul de Man does (though surely not so well); but it is probably impossible to teach someone to respond like a gifted metaphorical critic, a Virginia Woolf, if he hasn't an aptitude for it.

A third factor: critics now tend to share a sense that the culture is in a state of crisis. With the disappearance (for many) of authoritative truths, there is a yearning for some stable knowledge, even if it is a negative, skeptical knowledge, on which to rely. If the once authoritative centers—the government, the church, the family—no longer hold, then perhaps, as some contemporary critics suggest, it is up to criticism to provide terms for a humane social life. And if social reform becomes the critic's burden, then his work must take on a high seriousness. Aestheticism, eccentricity, experimentalism, the unorthodox: all these may be marginally tolerable in a world where civil and religious institutions seem stable, but in our current state of "crisis," literary criticism needs to become a site for intellectual contests about ultimate, general truths—political truths rather than personal ones. In a contest of big concepts and grand ideas, individual works are inevitably subsumed. When wars are on, even culture wars, all able bodies, corporeal and textual, have to be pressed into service.

What will happen if criticism collapses completely into theory? What will be lost if that long tradition of critics who defended art is finally made to look irretrievably old-fashioned by the new, streamlined theoretical models? Consider some examples of this endangered species of literary appreciation: Samuel Johnson on Milton's grand and unprecedented powers of imagination; William Hazlitt on Wordsworth's stunning originality; Keats on Shakespeare's extraordinary capacity for disinterestedness; Orwell on the generous anger of Charles Dickens. What comes out of these critical performances is a more finely shaded image of how singular is the author at hand. Such critical specificity, the recognition of what is unique and praiseworthy in artists, strikes a blow against those forces, be they conceptual or institutional, that tend to homogenize us, to cramp our hopes for growing more complexly and rewardingly individual than we are.

I don't want to be understood as saying that the theoretical attack on poetry must inevitably lead toward a cultural Iron Age. Once you've stripped theory of its Freudian presumptions about getting to the repressed origin, and so explaining the work once and for all, the skepticism that theory stimulates can be valuable. It is worth asking if Shakespeare lets out rebellious energies and then crushes them. And it's worth asking how much the impersonal and authoritative third-person voice of this or that novel encourages us to fall, both in reading and in day-to-day experience, into a

[Request]

LEAVE US OFF-LINE

From the letters-to-the-editor section of volume 1, issue number 3 of Plain: The Magazine of Life, Land, and Spirit, *a bimonthly published in Burton, Ohio.* Plain *advocates a technology-free existence based on Amish and Quaker principles; according to Scott Savage, the magazine's editor, American life is "moving at electronic speed. We're finding that people can't live at that speed. We're being crushed by the way we live."*

To the Editors:

I have enclosed $18 for a subscription to your magazine. I heard about you on a usenet newsgroup, alt.sustainable.agriculture. Somehow I find that pleasantly ironic.

Sincerely,
Roberta M.

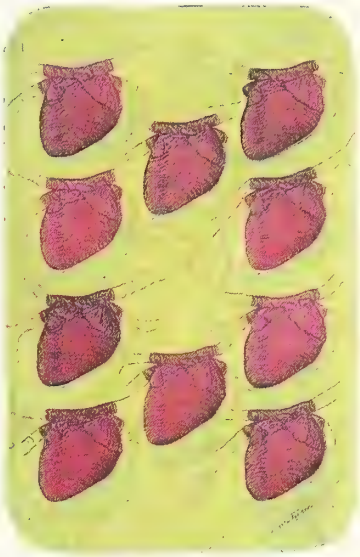
The editor responds:

If any of our subscribers have access to the Internet and come across a listing or discussion of *Plain,* would you please post the following statement from us?

"We the editors of *Plain* respectfully request that information about our magazine and the articles appearing in it *not* be referred to or used as topics on any of the interactive data networks. You have the right to speak freely; hence this is a request, not a demand. We don't expect everyone to agree with our intent, which is to keep the discussion of our approach to living out of the daily diet of information-consuming elites. We merely ask that our little corner of reality be left alone. We are confident that we can reach people and discuss the issues we are raising entirely and exclusively through the offices of the real world."







From Full Deck Art Quilts, *a traveling exhibition currently on display at the American Museum of Quilts and Textiles, in San Jose, California. According to a press release for the show, the project's coordinators asked fifty-four quilt artists "to interpret the cards of a standard deck of playing cards." The collection, the release says, "expands the definition of what a quilt is and can be." The quilts above are: "Nine of Diamonds," by Sue Pierce; "King of Clubs," by Joyce Marquess Carey; and "Ten of Hearts," by Barbara Mortenson.*

naive trust in impersonal authority. It's worth going along with Derrida and examining the power of images to mesmerize us.

But it's also worth answering back on behalf of literature and art. For theorizing is only half the work of literary criticism. The critic also shows—contra the deconstructors—how certain literary images, like Coleridge's wild poet with "flashing eyes and flowing hair" (a prototype for all rock stars past and to come), can stir unroutinized insubordinate energies in the reader; how Shakespeare's boisterous, exuberant Falstaff inspires us to fight with him against the urge, embodied by the icy Prince Hal, to suppress the more joyously anarchic human pleasures.

Critics must identify those points where literature resists being explained away. They must defend poetry at a time when art—and every expression of individual spirit—is under attack. By failing to place theory in the ancient quarrel and to see its connection to current anxieties, theorists may be deceiving themselves. What looks to them like a revolution has in many ways come to resemble the age-old reaction that flat-minded, respectable people have always had against literature. Brilliant theory is only half the game. If it's the only half you play, you're on the side of hard-eyed businessmen, of government know-it-alls, of smug philosophers, of all the people who think, however secretly, that art is a childish diversion that we can well do without.

[Meditation]

THOSE WHO MUST JUMP

From "Jumping from Bridges," a previously unpublished essay by M.F.K. Fisher, written in 1986, when Fisher was seventy-eight. The essay appeared in issue number 134 of The Paris Review. *Fisher was the author of more than twenty books, including* The Art of Eating *and, most recently,* Last House, *published by Pantheon. She died in 1992.*

Now I am thinking about jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge, and about other places where people have jumped to their deaths for many years. I think I should find out more about this, for I have an idea that there is some sort of collection of spirit strength or power or love in those places that says, *no*, or *yes*, or *now*.

I feel very strongly that this is true of the Golden Gate Bridge. Today I heard that people are trying once more to build a kind of suicide-prevention railing along its side, which would keep us from seeing the bay and the beautiful view of the city. I haven't read much about suicide lately, but I believe that 98 percent of such deaths leave more evil than good after them. Even my husband Dillwyn's death, which I still

feel was justified, left many of us with some bad things. And when my brother David died, about a year after my brother Timmy did, my mother asked me very seriously if I felt that Timmy's death had influenced David to commit his own suicide, which to me remains a selfish one, compared with the first. I said, "Of course, yes! I do think so, Mother." And I *did* think then that Timmy's doing away with himself helped David to kill himself. But there was *really* no connection; we don't know what the limit of tolerance is in any human being.

I do think, though, that there *has* to be a place where one can jump to one's death. There have always been such places. There is one in Japan that is quite famous. I believe it has something to do with Mount Fuji, which I saw in a strange breathtaking view from far away one day when Norah and I were in Japan in 1978. We had gone out with our chauffeur to meet some people for lunch, and suddenly the driver stopped the car abruptly. He said in an odd voice, "Look! Look!" And there, rising above a most dramatic Japanese-carved bank of mist and dark and light and lavender and white, was Fujiyama.

Even from a distance I could feel some of its enormous magic, and my hair prickled on my head. It was exactly like all the bad pictures I had seen on calendars and cans of beer. But it was there, and it was beautiful beyond the face of any god. It was all-powerful, and I felt like dying.

I have always known that there are some people who must jump, but I never really knew about it myself until I was almost overcome once by a need to go off the Golden Gate Bridge. I feel quite impersonal about it now, just as I did the day Arnold Gingrich came out to California and dedicated one whole day to me.

He said, "Please, let's make a list of everything you like to plan but never really do." It was all very touristy: we went to the Cliff House first, and then we drove to the San Francisco end of the Golden Gate Bridge, where I thought we would walk halfway across and then walk back. I never did tell Arnold about what happened, but about a quarter of a mile onto the bridge I realized that the whizzing cars on one side and the peaceful bay on the other were splitting me in two. The stronger half looked toward the city, the tranquil city, and I was almost overcome with the terrible need to jump off and be more peaceful.

I know it wasn't the sound of the traffic. It was a kind of force that was almost as strong as I, and I felt sick at the effort to resist it. I remember I took Arnold's arm and said, very coolly, "Let's go back now. Let's not go any further." And without question we turned around, and I stayed on the inside track, near the bridge rail, and as long as I kept my hand firmly on Arnold's arm I knew I would not do anything foolish. But I know that I have never had such a strong feeling of forces outside myself, except once at Stonehenge—

No, now that is not exactly true; there *were* two or three other times. One time, I remember, when Al and I were living in a room in Dijon above a pastry shop on the rue Monge, I felt a wave of horror. I didn't know it then, but the little square where I went to get water in big pitchers for our cooking and washing and so on had been an execution spot during the French Revolution. The guillotine was set up in that little *place*, and many fine Burgundians had their heads roll there.

I remember our apartment was charming—one large room with three windows looking down onto the old *place*. There was an alcove with a bed in it, and Al slept on the outside of the bed and I was on the inside, and one night I jumped right over him and stood in the mid-

[Found Poem]

SIGNALS AT SEA

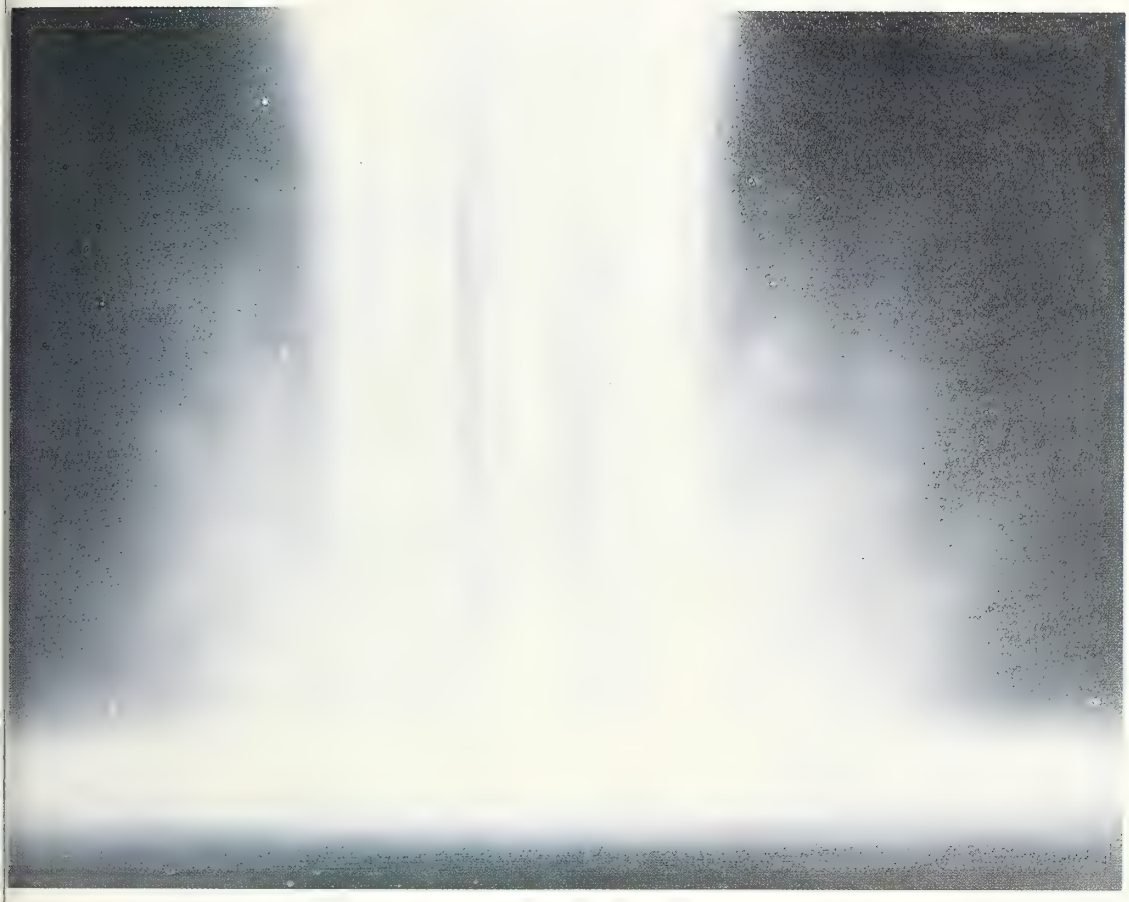
By Annie Dillard. From Mornings Like This, *a collection of Dillard's found poems, published by HarperCollins. Dillard composed this poem from the text of* Cugle's Practical Navigation, *by Charles H. Cugle, published in 1936.*

(If the flags in A's hoist cannot be made out, B keeps her answering pennant at the "Dip" and hoists the signal "OWL" or "WCX.")

CXL Do not abandon me.
A I am undergoing a speed trial.
D Keep clear of me—I am maneuvering with difficulty.
F I am disabled. Communicate with me.
G I require a pilot.

P Your lights are out, or burning badly.
U You are standing into danger.
X Stop carrying out your intentions.
K You should stop your vessel instantly.
L You should stop. I have something important to communicate.

R You may feel your way past me.



"Water Fall," by Hiroshi Senju, on display last spring at the Dillon Gallery in New York City. Senju lives in New York.

dle of the room, overcome by a sense of horror and fear. I felt filthy. Al woke up and asked what was wrong. I said, "Nothing! Nothing!" But I felt absolutely clammy and horror-stricken by something I did not understand.

Such times have made me believe that there are congregations of evil and that they are stronger than any of us. This is why people who are perhaps weak to begin with jump to their death at times. Perhaps many of them, like me, do not want to jump off into the deep water far, far below, but something says: Jump!

This is why I have often said, in a rather casual way, that I don't think there should be a fence on the Golden Gate Bridge. Some people are going to jump. And if they can't join the waters deep below and be swept out to sea, I think there should be someplace else for them. But that place and others like it have always been chosen not by the citizens of San Francisco or elsewhere and not by the people who built the bridge but by something much stronger than we know.

Perhaps there is something about water, or anything bridging a body of water, that seems to attract people to jump off out down into it. Very few people jump down into a pit of manure, except by accident, but there is something about a bridge over clear water, no matter how far down (perhaps the farther the better), that does pull people down into it, toward it. I know this pull well, and I have no feeling of impatience or anything but tolerance for the people who jump. There *must* be those places. There are those places.

I have not said that the Golden Gate itself had a feeling of evil when I almost jumped off it. Rather, I felt an urging toward oblivion, I suppose, toward peace. I do not believe it was bad. I do feel the Golden Gate Bridge is a place of great beauty, where many people merge with that beauty into a kind of serenity, a compulsion to get out of this world and into a better one. And that is not evil at all. But I do know that there are many evil things that lurk in the minds of all people who are left after the suicide of somebody they love. ■

How NEWT and his friends plan to change your life



Newt Gingrich is setting the agenda in Washington.

Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition has an even broader plan to change daily life in America.

Together they plan a revolution.

Just one item in their revolution (Newt's word) is to win election to School Boards across the country and stop the teaching of "un-Christian" ideas. Such as evolution, tolerance toward homosexuality, secular humanism and "devil worship" — that's how Robertson describes progressive ideas!

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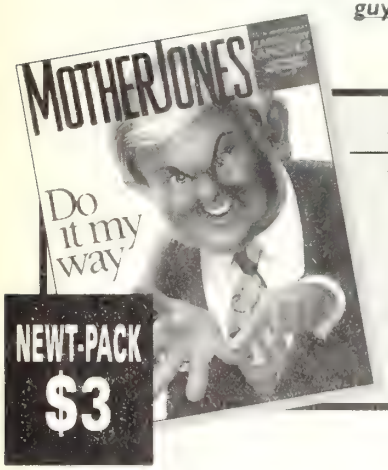
In 1984 we interviewed newly-elected Congressman Newt Gingrich and reported his spooky ideas — as well as the details of his own lifestyle that belie his public policy positions. (His first wife is still chasing him for support.)

Our early work on Newt has been quoted by the likes of the New York Times, Washington Post, Newsweek and the New Yorker since his elevation to House Speaker.

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WHAT ARE WE DOING ON-LINE?

"We become what we behold," Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1964. "We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us." The medium beheld with the most interest in McLuhan's day was television. Now, thirty years later, we have shaped for ourselves a new communications tool—the millions of networked computers that make up the Internet. It is a medium that is both like television—in that it involves people staring at glowing screens, sharing experiences, real and imagined, over vast distances—and unlike television—in that it is decentralized, interactive, and based on the written word.

Although considerable attention has been directed to the superficial aspects of the on-line world—its entertainment value, its investment opportunities, its possible abuse by child pornographers and drug runners—little has been said about how this tool we are shaping is, in turn, shaping us. To answer that question, *Harper's Magazine* turned to four observers of the Internet and asked them to consider the message of this new medium.

The following forum is based on a discussion that took place this spring in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Paul Tough, a senior editor of Harper's Magazine, *served as moderator.*

JOHN PERRY BARLOW
is one of the founders of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a group formed to protect civil liberties in cyberspace. He was a participant in "Is Computer Hacking a Crime?" a forum that appeared in the March 1990 issue of Harper's Magazine.

SVEN BIRKERTS
is the author, most recently, of The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age, *published by Faber and Faber, an excerpt from which appeared in the May 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

KEVIN KELLY
is the executive editor of Wired *magazine and the author of* Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-biological Civilization, *published by Addison-Wesley, an excerpt from which appeared in the May 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

MARK SLOUKA
is the author of War of the Worlds: Cyberspace and the Hi-tech Assault on Reality, *published by Basic Books. His short story "The Woodcarver's Tale" appeared in the March 1995 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

JOHN PERRY BARLOW: I have said on numerous occasions, and I still believe, that with the development of the Internet, and with the increasing pervasiveness of communication between networked computers, we are in the middle of the most transforming technological event since the capture of fire. I used to think that it was just the biggest thing since Gutenberg, but now I think you have to go back farther. There has been much written both celebrating and denouncing cyberspace, but to me this seems a development of such magnitude that trying to characterize it as a good thing or a bad thing trivializes it considerably. I also don't think it's a matter about which we have much choice. It is coming, whether we like it or not.

MARK SLOUKA: I get anxious when you say that talking about whether this is good or bad is beside the point. It seems to me it has to be *the* point. We can't talk about these emerging technologies without taking a look at the impact they're going to have on average human lives. And if, in fact, these new technologies are so vastly transforming, we have to take a look at where they're leading us. What direction are we going in?

BARLOW: We don't know.

SLOUKA: Why shouldn't I be terrified of that fact?

BARLOW: Well, what are you planning to do about it?

SLOUKA: I think that there are a lot of things we can do about it. I've heard this word "inevitable" used by everyone from Bill Gates to Newt Gingrich. I've certainly read it in the writings of both Kevin Kelly and John Perry Barlow. But it seems to me that "inevitability," when it's tossed around too lightly, is a way of declaring by fiat something that should still be open to discussion. We are entering uncharted territory. We have no idea what the health implications of these technologies are. And yet they are being embraced uncritically.

BARLOW: Let me tell you what I do for a living these days. I go around and tell people that something really weird is happening. Some fundamental shift is taking place that will have many consequences that I cannot imagine. But I think it's time we all started thinking about those consequences so that collectively we can make the little decisions that need to be made. That is all I do. I don't say that these changes are good. I certainly don't claim we're creating a utopia. I mean, I love the physical world. I spent seventeen years as a cattle rancher in Pinedale, Wyoming. I was basically living in the nineteenth century. If I could still make a living there, I would. But the fact is, there is very little economic room in the physical world these days. If you are making something you can touch, and doing well at it, then you are either an Asian or a machine.

SLOUKA: That is a hell of a generalization.

BARLOW: But it's largely true. There is not much room to exist in that part of the economy any longer, and I wish there were. Now, given that, I think there are a lot of forces that tend to head society toward cyberspace, whether it wants to go there or not. There are times when I

honestly believe that we would have been better off if we'd gone the way of the Aborigines, who have been sitting out in the Australian desert for the last fifty thousand years and have come up with precisely three tools. They did not make of their minds a very open ecology for the formation of tools. And as a result they are probably a lot more connected to the soul of the universe than we are at the moment. But however I may feel about it, I'm not sure there is a damn thing I can do about it, except try to be helpful to the people around me who might be suffering some kind of paroxysm as a result of this profound change in their lives.

SVEN BIRKERTS: This theme of inevitability pervades both your writing on the subject and Kevin's: "Go with it because it is inevitable, and adjust yourself as well as you can." Mark and I are questioning that inevitability. I want to know whether this is a juggernaut that is out of our control. It appears to be moving with a sort of self-proliferating logic of its own. I'm just curious about what is underwriting it.

BARLOW: You know what's underwriting it? It's the thing that sets human beings apart from all other species on this planet—a permanent hardwired dissatisfaction with the ecosystem they find themselves in. And a desire to adapt it to them, instead of to adapt to it. That itch is at the root of the human spirit.

SLOUKA: Hang on. I am not dissatisfied with the ecosystem I inhabit. I think the drive to get on-line is not so much this alleged dissatisfaction. I think it's 3.5 trillion dollars. It has been estimated that the business coming out of these technologies is going to amount to that sum. That's a nice pile of cash, and it's going to generate a need to convince us that we should follow along, that we should buy these things. I think that is one answer. The other answer is that the wired world is a response to certain cultural changes over the last two or three generations—the breakup of the family, the breakdown of the community, the degradation of the physical environment. I grew up in a little place up near the Catskills, Putnam Lake. It's gone. Every place I've loved in this world has been paved over, malled over, disappeared. As we observe this assault on the physical world, we feel ourselves losing control. I think alternative worlds become more appealing to us.

BIRKERTS: We're looking to technology to solve what it has wrought.

SLOUKA: And I think it's a culture-wide cop-out. Why bother fighting for those last stands of old growth in the Pacific Northwest when you can live on the new electronic frontier? I think the real answer has to be in the physical world. The only choice we have is to resuscitate our failed communities, to bring back Pinedale and Putnam Lake—to align ourselves with physical reality now, before it's too late. The answer is not in a-physical space. The answer is not virtual reality. Yet that is precisely the direction we're headed.

BIRKERTS: The last two words in my book are



"Refuse it." I don't mean that this is necessarily a realistic mass proposal. I mean that speaking subjectively, for myself, this is what my heart tells me to do.

BARLOW: If you can find a way to refuse it and make that refusal work for yourself, I think you should do precisely that. I'm pro-choice, to the extent that choice is possible.

BIRKERTS: But I am going to quote you to yourself, John. This is from the *Utne Reader*. "But really it doesn't matter. We are going there whether we want to or not. In five years, everyone who is reading these words will have an e-mail address, other than the determined Luddites, who also eschew the telephone and electricity." So that's the choice you're offering me: I can be a "determined Luddite."

BARLOW: You can.

BIRKERTS: In living my own life, what seems most important to me is focus, a lack of distraction—an environment that engenders a sustained and growing awareness of place, and face-to-face interaction with other people. I've deemed these to be the primary integers of

Illustrations by Warren Linn

building and sustaining this self. I see this whole breaking wave, this incursion of technologies, as being in so many ways designed to pull me from that center of focus. To give you a simple example: I am sitting in the living room playing with my son. There is an envelope of silence. I am focused. The phone rings. I am brought out. When I sit down again, the envelope has been broken. I am distracted. I am no longer in that moment. I have very nineteenth-century, romantic views of the self and what it can accomplish and be. I don't have a computer. I work on a typewriter. I don't do e-mail. It's enough for me to deal with mail. Mail itself almost feels like too much. I wish there were less of it and I could go about the business of living as an entity in my narrowed environment.

BARLOW: There is something so beautiful about that vision. I don't know that I could do it as elegantly, but if I were to describe my aspirations I wouldn't use many different terms from the ones you just did. Nietzsche said that sin is that which separates. And I think that information, as it has been applied primarily by broadcast media, and to a great extent by large institutions, has separated human beings from the kind of interaction that we are having here in this room. There was a long period when I adhered to your point of view, which is that the only way to deal with the information revolution is to refuse it. And, as I say, I spent seventeen years driving a four-horse team around, living in very direct contact with the phenomenal world and my neighbors. And what I finally concluded was that there were so many forces afoot that were in opposition to that way of life that the only way around technology was through it. I took faith in the idea that, on the other side of this info-desert we all seemed to be crossing, technology might restore what it was destroying. There's a big difference between information and experience. What you are talking about, Sven, is experience. That is the stuff of the soul. But if we're going to get back into an experiential world that has substance and form and meaning, we're going to have to go through information to get there.

BIRKERTS: But that implies that the process—going through the information world—isn't going to change us beyond recognition and warp the aspiration itself. That's my fear. I'm going to throw another set of terms in here that belong to Rilke. He said two different things that have struck me as very relevant to this. And again, we are dealing with a very romantic, poetic perspective. Speaking of poets, he said, "We are the bees of the invisible." The ultimate human purpose is to transform. And the other thing he said is that ultimately, when you kind of look down the long turnpike of the future, "Nowhere will world be but within us." I always read those two statements as saying that our collective evolutionary destiny is the conversion of contingent experience into soul-matter. But what I see happening instead is our wholesale wiring. And what the wires carry is not the stuff of the soul. I might feel differently if that was what they were transmitting. But it's

ECHO Conference on Matrix: Online Places
Item 57 (168) Echo as a Virtual Community
57:28) Lizbet (And Co.)
06-DEC-93 22:40

Earlier this year, when I was pregnant, I was hospitalized to help fight a virus that really had me down for the count. It was a really scary time--even though my doctor told us that the baby was fine, I had my doubts. I hated being in the hospital, and felt very lonely. My family was not terrifically supportive.

I was just ready to work myself up into a real pity party when the phone rang. It was Nzingha, who had called my house, gotten the news from Jake, and called because "the ECHO women were wondering where I was, and if I was okay."

That was the first time, but certainly not the last time, that I really felt part of a community that went beyond words on a screen. A community that rejoiced with us at our wedding, and at the birth of our son. A place that saved me from going cuckoo when I was in the house with a newborn and thought I'd never be able to carry on an adult conversation again.

I know that I'll be able to show my son Alex a record of his entry into the world--and all the people who were there to help welcome him. We joke that he'll laugh at the "primitive ascii interface." But I also hope that he'll be touched and encouraged by the people, many of whom he'll never "meet," who were so thrilled to hear that he'd joined this planet.

I was so very glad that you were there to share our joy then. And grateful--no, honored--I can't quite find the words here. All I know is that I'm crying here just remembering the outpouring of good wishes and emotions. It meant--and means--so much to me.

In certain locations on the Internet, computer users have devoted hundreds of screens-worth of text to conversations about the social consequences of life on-line. To supplement the face-to-face discussion between our four participants, Harper's Magazine *has selected relevant postings from three sites—the WELL, an on-line service based in Sausalito, California; ECHO, a New York City service; and the Internet Addiction Support Group, a recently founded Internet discussion group. These examples of on-line writing about on-line life appear throughout the text of the forum.*



not. It is data. The supreme capability that this particular chip-driven silicon technology has is to transfer binary units of information. And therefore, as it takes over the world, it privileges those units of information. When everyone is wired and humming, most of what will be going through those wires is that sort of information. If it were soul-data, that might be a different thing, but soul-data doesn't travel through the wires.

KEVIN KELLY: I have experienced soul-data through silicon. You might be surprised at the amount of soul-data that we'll have in this new space. That's why what is going on now is more exciting than what was going on ten years ago. Look, computers are over. All the effects that we can imagine coming from standalone computers have already happened. What we're talking about now is not a computer revolution, it's a communications revolution. And communication is, of course, the basis of culture itself. The idea that this world we are building is somehow diminishing communication is all wrong. In fact, it's enhancing communication. It is allowing all kinds of new language. Sven, there's this idea in your book that reading is the highest way in which the soul can discover and deepen its own nature. But there is nothing I've seen in online experience that excludes that. In fact, when I was reading your book I had a very interesting epiphany. At one point, in an essay on the experience of reading, you ask the question, "Where am I when I am involved in a book?" Well, here's the real answer: you're in cyberspace. That's exactly where you are. You're in the same place you are when you're in a movie theater, you're in the same place you are when you're on the phone, you're in the same place you are when you're on-line.

BIRKERTS: It's not the same at all. The argument is very attractive: "Well, it's just a word. It's a word on a screen, it's a word on a page. Same thing." But that's a limited way of looking at it. The larger picture has to include the particular medium through which we convey the word. When you write the word across a football stadium in skywriting, you're not just writing the word, you're writing the perception of the word through the air. When you're incising a word on a tombstone, you're not merely writing the word, you're writing a word as incised on a tombstone. Same for the book, and same for the screen. The medium matters because it defines the arena of sentience. The screen not only carries the words, it also says that communication is nothing more than the transfer of evanescent bits across a glowing panel.

BARLOW: I would agree with you completely that media have an enormously transforming effect. A word written in the sky by jet fighters is not the same as that word spoken by a lover.

BIRKERTS: Right.

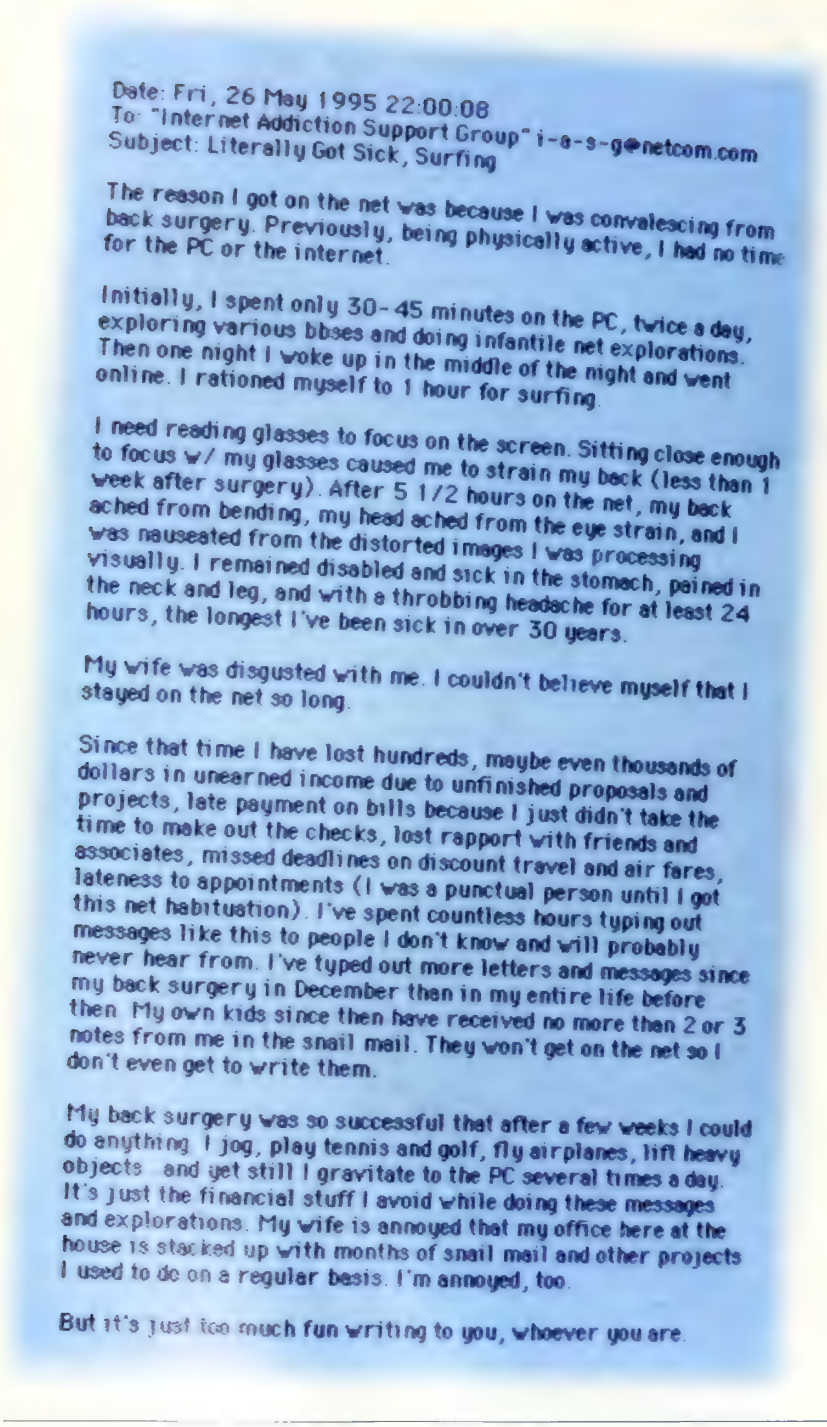
BARLOW: But part of the reason that I'm guardedly optimistic about these new technologies is that the word that is incised on a page in a book has to be put there by a large institution. Sitting between the author of that word and the reader

From: Mark Hughes <hughe881@uidaho.edu>
Subject: Speech
To: i-a-s-g@netcom.com (Internet Addiction Support Group)
Date: Sun, 28 May 1995 18:35:52

BTW, has anyone else noticed their verbal speech patterns changing from using the Net too much? I've found that unless I consciously "shift gears" back to normal speech, I talk two or three words at a time with pauses in between while my mind works out the next few words perfectly (since others can't usually see you type you have time to think ahead online, but you don't in the real world).

It's really rather disturbing, but since I can still shift back, I guess I'm all right. I've noticed similar changes in my friends (almost all of whom are online).

-Mark Hughes



Date: Fri, 26 May 1995 22:00:08
To: "Internet Addiction Support Group" i-a-s-g@netcom.com
Subject: Literally Got Sick, Surfing

The reason I got on the net was because I was convalescing from back surgery. Previously, being physically active, I had no time for the PC or the internet.

Initially, I spent only 30-45 minutes on the PC, twice a day, exploring various bbses and doing infantile net explorations. Then one night I woke up in the middle of the night and went online. I rationed myself to 1 hour for surfing.

I need reading glasses to focus on the screen. Sitting close enough to focus w/ my glasses caused me to strain my back (less than 1 week after surgery). After 5 1/2 hours on the net, my back ached from bending, my head ached from the eye strain, and I was nauseated from the distorted images I was processing visually. I remained disabled and sick in the stomach, pained in the neck and leg, and with a throbbing headache for at least 24 hours, the longest I've been sick in over 30 years.

My wife was disgusted with me. I couldn't believe myself that I stayed on the net so long.

Since that time I have lost hundreds, maybe even thousands of dollars in unearned income due to unfinished proposals and projects, late payment on bills because I just didn't take the time to make out the checks, lost rapport with friends and associates, missed deadlines on discount travel and air fares, lateness to appointments (I was a punctual person until I got this net habituation). I've spent countless hours typing out messages like this to people I don't know and will probably never hear from. I've typed out more letters and messages since my back surgery in December than in my entire life before then. My own kids since then have received no more than 2 or 3 notes from me in the snail mail. They won't get on the net so I don't even get to write them.

My back surgery was so successful that after a few weeks I could do anything. I jog, play tennis and golf, fly airplanes, lift heavy objects - and yet still I gravitate to the PC several times a day. It's just the financial stuff I avoid while doing these messages and explorations. My wife is annoyed that my office here at the house is stacked up with months of snail mail and other projects I used to do on a regular basis. I'm annoyed, too.

But it's just too much fun writing to you, whoever you are.

of that word is a huge mediating organism made up of organization and capital.

BIRKERTS: I can't really deny that.

BARLOW: And all that mediation has a great effect on that word. But between the word that I type into my computer and e-mail to you and the word that comes out on your end there's nothing but the digital transformation taking place. It is not mediated. It's as intimate as it possibly could be without me whispering it into your ear.

SLOUKA: But it seems to me that the kind of writing that's done in the electronic media has a sort of evanescence to it. There's an impermanence to it. A book, though, is something you can hold on to. It is a permanent thing. There is something else going on here, too. And that is what happens in the process of reading. When you read a book, there's a kind of a silence. And in that silence, in the interstices between the words themselves, your imagination has room to move, to create. On-line communication is filling those spaces. We are substituting a transitional, impermanent, ephemeral communication for a more permanent one.

BARLOW: You know, I'm beginning to realize that the principal difference between you and me, Mark, is that I take a considerably longer view of things. I mean, I think that the book is pretty damn ephemeral, too. The point is not the permanence or impermanence of the created thing so much as the relationship between the creative act and the audience. The big difference between experience and information is that with an experience, you can ask questions interactively, in real time. Sven, because you're sitting here, I can ask you questions about your book. As a reader I can't.

BIRKERTS: But as a writer I didn't want you to.

BARLOW: Well, you may or may not. But in order to feel the greatest sense of communication, to realize the most experience, as opposed to information, I want to be able to completely interact with the consciousness that's trying to communicate with mine. Rapidly. And in the sense that we are now creating a space in which the people of the planet can have that kind of communication relationship, I think

we're moving away from information—*through* information, actually—and back toward experience.

BIRKERTS: But that wasn't what I wanted in writing the book. The preferred medium for me is the word on the page, alone, with an implicit recognition that I'm not going to be there to gloss and elucidate and expand on it. It is what drives me, as a writer, to find the style that will best express my ideas. I would write very differently if I were typing on a terminal and my readers were out there already asking me questions. Writing a book is an act of self-limitation and, in a way, self-sublimation into language and expression and style. Style is very much a product of the print medium. I don't think that Flaubert, for example, could have written the way he did on a screen. In the move to on-line communication, the aspiration to the kind of style that seeks a sort of permanence, symbolized by immobile words on a page, vanishes. Okay, no big deal, except that I also believe that language is our evolutionary wonder. It is our marvel. If we're going to engage the universe, comprehend it and penetrate it, it will be through ever more refined language. The screen is a linguistic leveling device.

BARLOW: You say that the point of language is to evolve. Well, it seems to me that evolution occurs a lot more rapidly and better in open, unconstrained environments than in constrained environments.

BIRKERTS: But language is what communicates the subtlety of that evolution to us. We may be evolving on all fronts, but we only comprehend ourselves by way of language. And I think that the deep tendency of the circuited medium is to flatten language.

KELLY: Here you are wrong. If you hung out on-line, you'd find out that the language is not, in fact, flattening; it's flourishing. At this point in history, most of the evolution of language, most of the richness in language, is happening in this space that we are creating. It's not happening in novels.

BIRKERTS: I wish some of this marvelous prose could be downloaded and shown to me.

KELLY: You can't download it. That's the whole point. You want to download it so that you can read it like a book. But that's precisely what it can't be. You want it to be data, but it's experience. And it's an experience that you have to have *there*. When you go on-line, you're not going to have a book experience.

BIRKERTS: Well, I *want* a book experience.

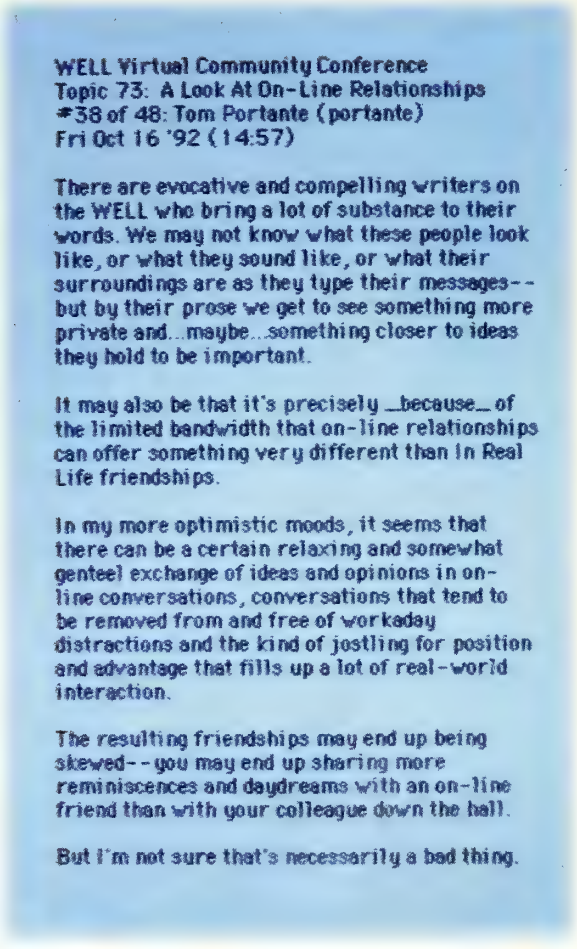
KELLY: You think that somehow a book is the height of human achievement. It is not.

SLOUKA: But there *is* a real decline in the kind of discourse taking place. I go back to what John said in an interview that I read not too long ago. He said that the Internet is "CB radio, only typing." That really stuck in my mind, because there's an incredible shallowness to most on-line communication. I realize that there are good things being said on the net, but by and large the medium seems to encourage quickness over depth, and rapid response over reflection.

AN E-MAIL EXCHANGE IS NOT MEDIATED. IT'S AS INTIMATE AS IT COULD BE WITHOUT ME WHISPERING IN YOUR EAR

KELLY: My advice would be to open your mind to the possibility that in creating cyberspace we've made a new space for literature and art, that we have artists working there who are as great as artists in the past. They're working in a medium that you might dismiss right now as inconsequential, just as the theater, in Shakespeare's day, was dismissed as outrageous and low-class and not very deep.

SLOUKA: You've pointed out that one of the advantages of the net is that everybody can pub-



THE QUESTION I KEEP ASKING IS: WHERE DOES THE NEED COME FROM TO INHABIT THESE ALTERNATE SPACES?

lish: it's a free medium. There's something very appealing and attractive about that. You can cut out the middleman—the publisher and the agent and everybody else. But when you open the floodgates entirely, you don't get egalitarianism. You get babble. My shopping list becomes as valuable as Cormac McCarthy's latest book. And then you go back to thinking, "Well, wait a minute, maybe those middlemen had some function, however flawed they were."

BIRKERTS: "I want my hierarchy!"

BARLOW: You said it!

BIRKERTS: I said it with quotes around it, but I said it.

BARLOW: There's a hell of a lot of babble in life, and there's a hell of a lot of babble in cyberspace. But there are certain expressions that rise above the noise. The ones that are most intimately familiar to me are things of my own creation. When my lover died last year, I e-mailed her eulogy—the words that I spoke at her funeral—to about sixty friends. Just to tell them that she had died and to tell them what I was thinking. One of them posted it someplace, another posted it someplace else, and the next thing I knew, I had received a megabyte of e-mail from all over the planet—thousands and thousands of pages. People I'd never met talking about the death of a loved one, talking about things they hadn't talked about with anyone. What I wrote had self-reproduced.

BIRKERTS: Well, as the psychologists say, "How did that make you feel?"

BARLOW: It made me feel like my grief was not just my own, that it was something I had shared, inadvertently, with the rest of my species. And my species, in some abstract way, had answered.

SLOUKA: But the reason you did that was probably because you didn't have a community of friends around you, a Pinedale, where everyone would have known your lover and would have shared your grief. And instead of writing back to you and saying, "John, we're sorry," they would have, I don't know, God forbid, hugged you.

BIRKERTS: Baked you a pie.

SLOUKA: Shown up at your doorstep. My point is not that you can't find compassion and communitarian values on the net. You can. But you can find them just as well, and better, in a real community. One phenomenon I encountered on the Internet was that people would put words like "grin" or "smile" or "hug" in parentheses in a note. It's a code meaning cyberhugs, cybersmiles, cyberkisses. But at bottom, that cyberkiss is not the same thing as a real kiss. At bottom, that cyberhug is not going to do the same thing. There's a big difference.

BARLOW: Yes, there is a difference. But I wasn't without the warmth of my friends. I got a lot of hugs during that period, and I still get them. My community was around me. I mean, it wasn't a case of either/or. I didn't have to give up the human embrace in order to have this other, slightly larger form of human embrace, a kind of meta-embrace. One supplemented the other.

SLOUKA: At some point do you think the virtual world is basically going to replace the world we live in? Is it going to be an alternate space?

WELL Parenting Conference
Topic 596: Online limits
#1 of 75
Sat, Mar 12, '94

I'm new here, but sought you out because I need advice/opinions/help from a group of people who understand what I am talking about. I have a 14 yr old daughter who is very active online (INN and Prodigy right now). Problem is, while I would love her to be active in the teen discussion areas, she is instead trolling for men in the singles areas. She begins relationships online, but many of them now include phone calls and letters. The men range in age from their early 20s to the their middle 40s.

My whole philosophy is that my job as a father is to make it likely she'll make it into her 20s relatively well adjusted. In other words, I'm not trying to get her to be like anyone. I get calls from parents of kids on these other services who only let their kids online when they are looking over their shoulders. That's not me.

Still, I keep wondering if I'm being protective enough. In this virtual world she can pretend she is anyone she wants to be. Should I insist she be herself?

As you can see, there are little questions, like should there be limits, and big questions, like what are the rules in this virtual world?

I think about these things, but have no answers.

KELLY: No, it's going to be an auxiliary space. There will be lots of things that will be similar to the physical world, and there will be lots of things that will be different. But it's going to be a space that's going to have a lot of the attributes that we like in reality—a richness, a sense of place, a place to be silent, a place to go deep.

SLOUKA: But the question that I keep asking myself is: Why the need? Where does the need come from to inhabit these alternate spaces? And the answer I keep coming back to is: to escape the problems and issues of the real world. I've talked to a lot of people who go on to the net and take on alternate personas. I mean, why the hell would you do that?

BARLOW: Because you want to experiment.

SLOUKA: Why are you experimenting? Because you're threatened by the reality you inhabit.

BARLOW: Is there something wrong with experimenting?

SLOUKA: There is if it distracts us from the problems at hand. One of the people I interviewed for my book was a man who posed on the net as a woman. He wanted to see what it's like to be a woman and what it's like to be hit on by another male. He wanted to get away from sexism, ageism, racism—all the collected "isms" that go along with life in the real world. Instead of dealing with those issues, though, he was sidestepping them.



KELLY: Have you ever been to Europe?

SLOUKA: To Europe? Yes.

KELLY: Why? You have your own community. Why go to Europe?

SLOUKA: Because I wanted to experience another physical community.

KELLY: Yes.

SLOUKA: I underscore the word "physical."

KELLY: Well, even though we're physical beings, we have an intellectual sphere. It's like reading a book, one that you lose yourself in completely. Why does one do that? Do I have to be really messed up to want to lose myself in a book?

SLOUKA: I hope not.

BARLOW: Well, why would you want to flee the physical world into a book?

BIRKERTS: I agree—reality is often not enough. But I think we have diverged here from the central point. If we're merely talking about this phenomenon as an interesting, valuable supplement for those who seek it, I have no problem with it. What I'm concerned by is this becoming a potentially all-transforming event that's going to change not only how I live but how my children live. I don't believe it's merely going to be auxiliary. I think it's going to be absolutely central.

BARLOW: You know, it's possible that both of those things can be perfectly correct. In terms of your life span, I don't think that there's any reason you can't go on leading exactly the life you lead now, living with the technology you find most comfortable, reading your books—of which there are likely to be more over the period of your lifetime, by the way, rather than less. I see no reason why you can't personally "refuse it." But over the long haul, I'd say that society, everything that is human on this planet, is going to be profoundly transformed by this, and in many ways, some of which will probably be scary to those of us with this mind-set, some of which will be glorious and transforming.

BIRKERTS: But even if I've pledged myself personally, as part of my "refuse it" package, to the old here and now, it still impinges on me, because it means I live in a world that I find to be increasingly attenuated, distracted, fanned-out, disembodied. Growing up in the Fifties, I felt I was living in a very real place. The terms of human interchange were ones I could navigate. I could get an aura buzz from living. I can still get it, but it's harder to find. More and more of the interchanges that are being forced on me as a member of contemporary society involve me having to deal with other people through various layers of scrim, which leaves me feeling disembodied. What I'm really trying to address is a phenomenon that you don't become aware of instantly. It encroaches on you. I do believe that we gain a lot of our sense of our own reality and validity through being able to hear an echo, by

getting our words back, by being mirrored. And community, in the old-world sense, was about being mirrored immediately. You know, you yell for Clem, and Clem yells back, and you understand the terms of your world. Now you type something to, say, Kiichi in Tokyo, and it comes back a few hours later. You're being mirrored in another way. Maybe it's because I'm not on-line, but it seems to me, as an adult human being living in 1995, that the signal is getting weaker. I find that more and more I navigate my days within this kind of strange landscape. People have drawn into their houses, and the shades are down. You go into a store and the clerk isn't looking at you, he's busy running bar codes. And you multiply that a thousandfold: mediation, mediation, mediation. I want an end to mediation. And I don't think I can break the membrane by going on-line.

THE INTRODUCTION OF FIRE PRODUCED GREAT CHANGES IN SOCIETY. THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT EVERYTHING IS ON FIRE

BARLOW: Sven, you and I are in absolute, complete agreement on this. But the alienating engine that I perceive in society is broadcast media, particularly television. I mean, the reason people are hermetically sealed in their homes is that they are worshiping the glass tit of fear, which is telling them that the world is too scary to go out in. I live part of the time in New York, which is widely known to be a terrifying, dangerous place. I never feel in danger there. Not ever. But if I watched television, I'd never set foot on the island of Manhattan. Nor would I ever leave my suburban home, I suspect. But this is the result of a one-way medium of communication. It's the same species of communication as your beloved book. Neither the book nor the television is face-to-face in any form.

KELLY: Sven, I think part of what you're saying is true. You're ignoring the center of the culture, and therefore you feel sort of cut off. The culture has shifted to a new medium. But it's not going to be the only medium there is. The introduction of fire produced great changes in our society. That doesn't mean that everything is on fire. Digital technologies and the net can have a great effect without meaning that everything has to *be* the net. I listen to books on tape. I have for many years. I couldn't live without them. I listen to the radio. I read books. I read magazines. I write letters. All of these things are not going to go away when the net comes.

BIRKERTS: But don't you think it's a push-pull model? If you send out a net that allows you to be in touch with all parts of the globe, you may well get a big bang out of doing that, but you can't do that and then turn around and look at your wife in the same way. The psyche is a closed system. If you spread yourself laterally, you sacrifice depth.

KELLY: I question that trade-off. That's my whole point about this kind of environment. It's not that we're going to deduct the book, though the book will certainly lose its preeminence. The flourishing of digital communication will enable more options, more possibilities, more diversity, more room, more frontiers. Yes, that will close off things from the past, but that is a choice I will accept.

SLOUKA: See, the confusion is understandable because so

WELL Miscellaneous Conference
Topic 938 [misc]: Does Cyberspace make you a better person? Or not?
#25 of 33: Alan Eshleman (doctore) Sat Apr 9 '94 (09:22)

If happier is better then, yes, being online has made me a better person.

The best part of cyberspace--and the WELL in particular--has been the social dimensions that have unfolded. I'm a hard-working primary care physician, who spends his work days and nights listening to people in various degrees of distress. All that listening, coupled with the fact that I can't always help, is sometimes numbing. My response to this--before cyberspace--has been to go home, take the phone off the hook, stare at the ceiling, and try to recharge my batteries for another day.

Sometimes, while staring at the ceiling, I'd wonder where all those folks I used to hang out with were: where were the fifty-year-old guitar pickers? Where were the visionaries? Where were the people who enjoyed a good game of poker?

Well, they're here! And because the WELL has such a concentration of Bay Area subscribers, I've had a chance to meet them face-to-face.

In the short time I've been here I've become a regular member of a group of singers and guitar pickers who get together to share music; I've crewed on a sailboat that won its race, I've played bridge and poker; I've become addicted to the Chinese New Year's Treasure Hunt, and I've also had the opportunity to help a few individuals in very concrete ways.

I realize that all of this could have happened without cyberspace, but in my case I doubt that it would have

much of the hype surrounding the digital revolution revolves around this issue of inevitability.

KELLY: But it *is* inevitable.

SLOUKA: Well, which is it? Is it inevitable or isn't it?

KELLY: It's inevitable that the net will continue to grow, to get bigger, to get more complex, to become the dominant force in the culture. *That* is inevitable. What's *not* inevitable is what you choose to do about it.

SLOUKA: So I have the option of being marginalized?

KELLY: That's right. You can be like the Amish. Noble, but marginal.

SLOUKA: It seems to me that we have to keep a balance. The balance right now, as I see it, is tipping toward virtual technology, toward virtual reality, toward mediated worlds, and that mediation is dangerous both culturally and politically. Culturally, it sets us apart from one another. Politically, it opens us up to manipulation. Someone can manipulate the reality I'm getting on-line more easily than they can manipulate the reality I get face-to-face. So the answer is to go carefully, to take a selective look at what we're losing along the way, to discuss what's happening.

KELLY: And after we've discussed it, what do we do?

SLOUKA: My answer, to quote Sven, is that you refuse it.

BARLOW: And you can do that. You can be just as conservative as you want to be.

SLOUKA: That's not a word that most people associate with me, but all right.

BARLOW: But in fact that's what you are. We are all, at this table, basically old hippies. There are two kinds of old hippies now, and yours is actually the dominant form. What I find distressingly common among these heretofore world-changing types is a kind of obdurate conservatism that would have shamed their fathers.

BIRKERTS: But I see world-changing as different. There was a world-changing spirit that precisely recognized the insidious effect of mass phenomena, of huge governmental agencies, of technology. You know, the back-to-the-land initiative. It was a community initiative. And I see people who've gone on-line as having turned against that old spirit.

BARLOW: The reason I got interested in all of this stuff was because I actually did go back to the land, unlike many old hippies. And after seventeen years I recognized the historical trends

Date: Fri, 2 Jun 1995
From: CAJENSEN@cc.weber.edu
To: "Internet Addiction Support Group" <i-a-s-g@netcom.com>
Subject: introduction?

I got my modem hooked up about 7 months ago for the first time ever and have kind of lived on the computer ever since. This is the second quarter in a row that I will be failing out of my University courses because I can't drag myself away from the computer...sounds bad, BUT I have gotten involved with a guy far far away and I just can't help it. 6-8 hours a day usually.

I don't know what else to write, so I will just lurk on the list for a while if that is ok. I have to go to bed now anyhow so I can get up and talk to him in 7 hours. :)

See ya. :)

cajensen@cc.weber.edu

Date: Sat, 3 Jun 1995 15:45:52
From: ecrefi01 <ecrefi01@barney.poly.edu>
To: "Internet Addiction Support Group" <i-a-s-g@netcom.com>
Subject: Re: introduction? [cajensen@cc.weber.edu]

Wow--that sounds really difficult, maintaining a long-distance relationship while going to school, not to mention the other trials and tribulations of daily life. I have been having more and more problems getting through my classes since I started my computer engineering major 3 years ago, in part due to a relationship that keeps me on the phone for several hours every night, and also because of an increased dependence on computers and the net to help me escape from any problems I may be having.

If you are spending much of your time online doing things not related to your relationship, maybe you are doing that to numb out your feelings or escape from them, similar to the way I do. Is this the reason you can't drag yourself away from your computer, or is it because you are waiting online for a message from the guy you are involved with? Waiting for a message from someone causes additional stress and anxiety. I've waited online for messages from friends knowing that they would be going online at a certain time and hoping that they would read my message and send a response. Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't, but as time passed the persistent thoughts that I really should be offline doing homework or studying for a test I was having the next day often became unbearable, to the point that I would start shaking and be on the brink of tears. My solution to this problem, 99% of the time, was to go do some Web searching to take my mind off things. If I wasn't satisfied with my random searches, I became depressed and exhausted, so tired that I HAD to go to bed as soon as I disconnected. In other words, I never got to study or do work.

Internet addiction is a bad problem, and I hope you will decide to stay with the group and tell us more about how you experience this problem.

Take care, and I hope to hear from you again soon.

Elizabeth

WE ARE BEING FORCED TO ADAPT BY A SOCIAL CONSENSUS THAT SAYS IF YOU DON'T HAVE "X" YOU'RE OUT OF THE LOOP

that nobody can do anything about, any more than the Indians could do anything about the historical trends that changed their society. And I decided, Okay, how can I find a way to preserve the values that I care about? Is there a context in which those values might be nurtured? Is there a way to dismantle these great creatures of corporate power? And my answer, and it is tentative, was that it looked like the net might have some real potential there.

BIRKERTS: So what you did is you substituted a virtual community for a real one. You found a community in cyberspace. And I guess I'm wondering if it's a community in a way that keeps the meaning of that word viable.

BARLOW: I'm not certain that it is. I mean, I went in there looking, and I can't say I've found it yet. But at the same time, I've watched what has happened to my own community, where I still live, my little town in Wyoming, as a result of broadcast media. I see what happened to that culture as soon as the satellite dishes bloomed in the backyards. And it has been devastating.

BIRKERTS: You don't see cyberspace as the extension of the satellite dish?

BARLOW: Absolutely not. If you had experienced this to any large extent, if you had been around it in the way that Kevin and I have, you would see that it is absolutely antithetical to the satellite.

KELLY: I wasn't joking when I said that when you're reading a book, you're in cyberspace. Being in cyberspace is much closer to reading a book than it is to watching TV. A lot of the things you seem to be looking for in the culture of the book, Sven, can actually be found in the culture of the screen.

BIRKERTS: It's not necessarily that all of these changes, if they were occurring over a sufficient length of time, would be so bad. But what's happening is that we're being evolutionally tyrannized. We are being forced to adapt by a pressing social consensus that seems to say that if you don't have "x" you're out of the loop. You're going to be marginalized in your workplace. If I don't have a disk to send my articles in to a journal, I feel like there's a problem. If I don't have a fax machine, I'm losing business. If I don't have a phone-answering machine, God knows what might happen. The attitude is, "If you're not on the bus then forget it, man. You're just rooting around for potatoes." I don't want to be forced into that either/or. I want to be able to say, "Let me think about it." Maybe in ten years I'll get a fax machine. I don't want to feel that if I'm not receiving a fax every second I am no longer existing in the cultural community in which I want to exist.

BARLOW: Again, all I see dividing us is temperament. There's nothing you just said about the desire to have your choices that I don't support. Nobody I know is more devoutly prochoice than I am. Just because I'm observing that a great social transformation is taking place because of technology doesn't mean that I like every single aspect of it. But I do try to adapt to that which I can't change. I do have my own personal sense of whether or not technology is working for me. And that really takes me back to Nietzsche's statement about sin. If it feels to me that technology separates me, I try to reject it. If it feels like it has within it the opportunity to bring me closer, on some spiritual level, to the rest of humanity, I accept it. ■

WELL Archives Conference
Topic 239: My Turn
#1 of 605: A new pseud for a new life (mandel)
Sat, Mar 25, '95

I don't quite know how to say this...I'm not that ill with cancer yet but I am down to one lung and a lung that's not working very well. What it all comes down to is that I probably don't have a whole bunch of time left around these parts, I mean maybe I do and maybe I don't but I wouldn't throw a lot of money at at these odds.

It's bad luck to say goodbye before it's time to do so and there's no point in embracing death before one's time, but I thought maybe I'd sneak in a topic, not too maudlin I hope, in which I could slowly say goodbye to my friends here, curse my enemies one more time (well, not really worth the trouble, actually), and otherwise wave a bit at the rest of you until it's just not time to do so any more.

I could start off by thanking you all, individually and collectively, for a remarkable experience, this past decade here on the WELL. For better and for worse--there were a lot of both--it has been the time of my life and especially a great comfort during these difficult past six months. I'm sad, terribly sad, I cannot tell you how sad and grief-stricken I am that I cannot stay to play and argue with you much longer. It seems almost as if I am the one who will be left behind to grieve for all of you dying.

So, thank you all, my best wishes and prayers to each and every one of you. It's been a fabulous life and it wouldn't have been the same without you.

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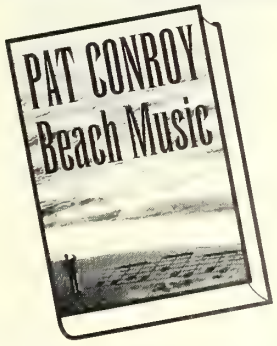
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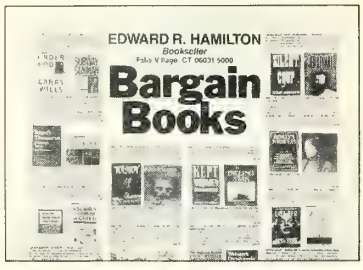
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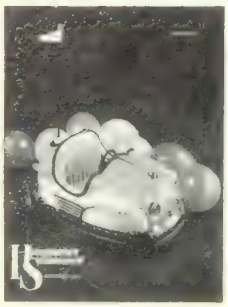


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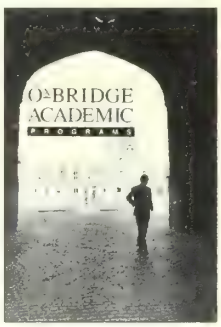
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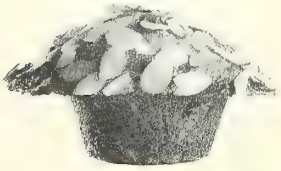
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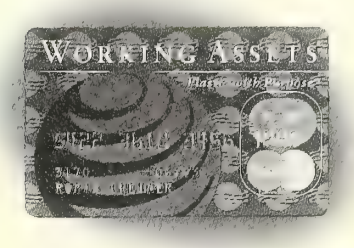
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WHERE WORLDS COLLIDE

In Los Angeles International Airport, the future touches down

By Pico Iyer

They come out, blinking, into the bleached, forgetful sunshine, in Dodgers caps and Rodeo Drive T-shirts, with the maps their cousins have drawn for them and the images they've brought over from *Cops* and *Terminator 2;* they come out, dazed, disoriented, heads still partly in the clouds, bodies still several time zones—or centuries—away, and they step into the Promised Land.

In front of them is a Van Stop, a Bus Stop, a Courtesy Tram Stop, and a Shuttle Bus Stop (the shuttles themselves tracing circuits A, B, and C). At the Shuttle Bus Stop, they see the All American Shuttle, the Apollo Shuttle, Celebrity Airport Livery, the Great American Stageline, the Movie Shuttle, the Transport, Ride-4-You, and forty-two other magic buses waiting to whisk them everywhere from Bakersfield to Disneyland. They see Koreans piling into the Taeguk Airport Shuttle and the Seoul Shuttle, which will take them to Koreatown without their ever feeling they've left home; they see newcomers from the Middle East disappearing under the Arabic script of the Sahara Shuttle. They see fast-talking, finger-snapping, palm-slapping jive artists straight from their TV screens shouting incomprehensible slogans about deals, destinations, and drugs. Over there is a block-long white limo, a Lincoln Continental, and, over there, a black Chevy Blazer with Mexican stickers all over its windows, being towed. They have arrived in the Land of Opportunity, and the opportunities are swirling dizzily, promiscuously, around them.



They have already braved the ranks of Asian officials, the criminal-looking security men in jackets that say "Elsinore Airport Services," the men shaking tins that say "Helping America's Hopeless." They have already seen the tilting mugs that say "California: a new slant on life" and the portable fruit machines in the gift shop. They have already, perhaps, visited the rest room where someone has written, "Yes on Proposition 187. Mexicans go home," the snack bar where a slice of pizza costs $3.19 (18 quetzals, they think in horror, or 35,000 dong), and the sign that urges them to try the Cockatoo Inn Grand Hotel. The latest arrivals at Los Angeles International Airport are ready now to claim their new lives.

Above them in the terminal, voices are repeating, over and over, in Japanese, Spanish,

Pico Iyer is the author of several books of travel writing, including Video Night in Kathmandu *and* Falling off the Map. *His first novel,* Cuba and the Night, *has just been published by Knopf.*

Photographs by Steve Lehman

and unintelligible English, "Maintain visual contact with your personal property at all times." Out on the sidewalk, a man's voice and a woman's voice are alternating an unending refrain: "The white zone is for loading and unloading of passengers only. No parking." There are "Do Not Cross" yellow lines cordoning off parts of the sidewalk and "Wells Fargo Alarm Services" stickers on the windows; there are "Aviation Safeguard" signs on the baggage carts and "Beware of Solicitors" signs on the columns; there are even special phones "To Report Trouble." More male and female voices are intoning, continuously, "Do not leave your car unattended" and "Unattended cars are subject to immediate tow-away." There are no military planes on the tarmac here, the newcomers notice, no khaki soldiers in fatigues, no instructions not to take photographs, as at home; but there are civilian restrictions every bit as strict as in many a police state.

"This Terminal Is in a Medfly Quarantine Area," says the sign between the terminals. "Stop the Spread of Medfly!" If, by chance, the new Americans have to enter a parking lot on their way out, they will be faced with "Cars left over 30 days may be impounded at Owner's Expense" and "Do not enter without a ticket." It will cost them $16 if they lose their parking ticket, they read, and $56 if they park in the wrong zone. Around them is an unending cacophony of antitheft devices, sirens, beepers, and car-door openers; lights are flashing everywhere, and the man who fines them $16 for losing their parking ticket has the tribal scars of Tigre across his forehead.

The blue skies and palm trees they saw on TV are scarcely visible from here: just an undifferentiated smoggy haze, billboards advertising Nissan and Panasonic and Canon, and beyond those an endlessly receding mess of gray streets. Overhead, they can see the all-too-familiar signs of Hilton and Hyatt and Holiday Inn; in the distance, a sea of tract houses, mini-malls, and high-rises. The City of Angels awaits them.

It is a commonplace nowadays to say that cities look more and more like airports, cross-cultural spaces that are a gathering of tribes and races and variegated tongues; and it has always been true that airports are in many ways like miniature cities, whole, self-sufficient communities, with their own chapels and museums and gymnasiums. Not only have airports colored our speech (teaching us about being upgraded, bumped, and put on standby, coaching us in the ways of fly-by-night operations, holding patterns, and the Mile High Club); they have also taught us their own rules, their own codes, their own customs. We eat and sleep and shower in airports; we pray and weep and kiss there. Some people stay for days at a time in these perfectly convenient, hermetically sealed, climate-controlled duty-free zones, which offer a kind of caesura from the obligations of daily life.

Airports are also, of course, the new epicenters and paradigms of our dawning post-national age—not just the bus terminals of the global village but the prototypes, in some sense, for our polyglot, multicolored, user-friendly future. And in their very universality—like the mall, the motel, or the McDonald's outlet—they advance the notion of a future in which all the world's a multiculture. If you believe that more and more of the world is a kind of mongrel hybrid in which many cities (Sydney, Toronto, Singapore) are simply suburbs of a single universal order, then Los Angeles's LAX, London's Heathrow, and Hong Kong's Kai Tak are merely stages on some great global Circle Line, shuttling variations on a common global theme. Mass travel has made L.A. contiguous to Seoul and adjacent to São Paulo, and has made all of them now feel a little like bedroom communities for Tokyo.

WE EAT AND SLEEP AND SHOWER IN AIRPORTS; WE PRAY AND WEEP AND KISS THERE. SOME PEOPLE STAY FOR DAYS AT A TIME

And as with most social trends, especially the ones involving tomorrow, what is true of the world is doubly true of America, and what is doubly true of America is quadruply true of Los Angeles. L.A., legendarily, has more Thais than any city but Bangkok, more Koreans than any city but Seoul, more El Salvadorans than any city outside of San Salvador, more Druze than anywhere but Beirut; it is, at the very least, the easternmost outpost of Asia and the northernmost province of Mexico. When I stopped at a Traveler's Aid desk at LAX recently, I was told I could request help in Khamu, Mien, Tigrinya, Tajiki, Pashto, Dari, Pangasinan, Pampangan, Waray-Waray, Bambara, Twi, and Bicolano (as well, of course, as French, German, and eleven languages from India). LAX is as clear an image as exists today of the world we are about to enter, and of the world that's entering us.

For me, though, LAX has always had a more personal resonance: it was in LAX that I arrived myself as a new immigrant, in 1966; and from the time I was in the fourth grade, it was

to LAX that I would go three times a year, as an "unaccompanied minor," to fly to school in London—and to LAX that I returned three times a year for my holidays. Sometimes it seems as if I have spent half my life in LAX. For me, it is the site of my liberation (from school, from the Old World, from home) and the place where I came to design my own new future.

Often when I have set off from L.A. to some distant place—Havana, say, or Hanoi, or Pyongyang—I have felt that the multicultural drama on display in LAX, the interaction of exoticism and familiarity, was just as bizarre as anything I would find when I arrived at my foreign destination. The airport is an Amy Tan novel, a short story by Bharati Mukherjee, a Henry James sketch set to an MTV beat; it is a cross-generational saga about Chang Hsieng meeting his daughter Cindy and finding that she's wearing a nose ring now and is shacked up with a surfer from Berlin. The very best kind of airport reading to be found in LAX these days is the triple-decker melodrama being played out all around one—a complex tragicomedy of love and war and exile, about people fleeing centuries-old rivalries and thirteenth-century mullahs and stepping out into a fresh, forgetful, born-again city that is rewriting its script every moment.

THIS AIRPORT IS A PERFECT METAPHOR FOR L.A., A FLAT PLACE WITH LITTLE READING MATTER AND NO ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE

Not long ago I went to spend a week in LAX. I haunted the airport by day and by night, I joined the gloomy drinkers listening to air-control-tower instructions on earphones at the Proud Bird bar. I listened each morning to Airport Radio (530 AM), and I slept each night at the Airport Sheraton or the Airport Hilton. I lived off cellophaned crackers and Styrofoam cups of tea, browsed for hours among Best Actor statuettes and Beverly Hills magnets, and tried to see what kinds of America the city presents to the new Americans, who are remaking America each day.

It is almost too easy to say that LAX is a perfect metaphor for L.A., a flat, spaced-out desert kind of place, highly automotive, not deeply hospitable, with little reading matter and no organizing principle. (There are eight satellites without a center here, many international arrivals are shunted out into the bleak basement of Terminal 2, and there is no airline that serves to dominate LAX as Pan Am once did JFK.) Whereas "SIN" is a famously ironical airline code for Singapore, cathedral of puritanical rectitude, "LAX" has always seemed perilously well chosen for a city whose main industries were traditionally thought to be laxity and relaxation. LAX is at once a vacuum waiting to be colonized and a joyless theme park—Tomorrowland, Adventureland, and Fantasyland all at once.

The postcards on sale here (made in Korea) dutifully call the airport "one of the busiest and most beautiful air facilities in the world," and it is certainly true that LAX, with thirty thousand international arrivals each day—roughly the same number of tourists that have visited the Himalayan country of Bhutan in its entire history—is not uncrowded. But bigger is less and less related to better: in a recent survey of travel facilities, *Business Traveller* placed LAX among the five worst airports in the world for customs, luggage retrieval, and passport processing.

LAX is, in fact, a surprisingly shabby and hollowed-out kind of place, certainly not adorned with the amenities one might expect of the world's strongest and richest power. When you come out into the Arrivals area in the International Terminal, you will find exactly one tiny snack bar, which serves nine items; of them, five are identified as Cheese Dog, Chili Dog, Chili Cheese Dog, Nachos with Cheese, and Chili Cheese Nachos. There is a large panel on the wall offering rental-car services and hotels, and the newly deplaned American dreamer can choose between the Cadillac Hotel, the Banana Bungalow (which offers a Basketball Court, "Free Toast," "Free Bed Sheets," and "Free Movies and Parties"), and the Backpacker's Paradise (with "Free Afternoon Tea and Crumpets" and "Free Evening Party Including Food and Champagne").

Around one in the terminal is a swirl of priests rattling cans, Iranians in suits brandishing pictures of torture victims, and Japanese girls in Goofy hats. "I'm looking for something called Clearasil," a distinguished-looking Indian man diffidently tells a cashier. "Clearasil?" shouts the girl. "For your face?"

Upstairs, in the Terrace Restaurant, passengers are gulping down "Dutch Chocolate" and "Japanese Coffee" while students translate back and forth between English and American, explaining that "soliciting" loses something of its cachet when you go across the Atlantic. A fat man is nuzzling the neck of his outrageously pretty Filipina companion, and a few Brits are staring doubtfully at the sign that assures them that seafood is "cheerfully served at your table!" Only in America, they are

loubtless thinking. A man goes from table to able, plunking down on each one a key chain ıttached to a globe. As soon as an unsuspecting customer picks one up, touched by the ıargesse of the New World and convinced ıow that there *is* such a thing as a free lunch n America, the man appears again, flashes a ign that says "I Am a Deaf," and requests a lollar for the gift.

At a bank of phones, a saffron-robed monk gingerly inserts a credit card, while schoolkids ɔage Jesse Jackson at the nearest "white courtesy telephone." One notable feature of the nodern airport is that it is wired, with a vengeance: even in a tiny, two-urinal men's oom, I found two telephones on offer; LAX ɔars rent out cellular phones; and in the Arrivals area, as you come out into the land of ɔlenty, you face a bank of forty-six phones of every kind, with screens and buttons and translations, from which newcomers are calling direct to Bangalore or Baghdad. Airports ıre places for connections of all kinds and *loci classici*, perhaps, for a world ruled by IDD and MCI, DOS and JAL.

Yet for all these grounding reminders of the world outside, everywhere I went in the airport felt myself in an odd kind of twilight zone of consciousness, that weightless limbo of a world n which people are between lives and between selves, almost sleepwalking, not really sure of who or where they are. Light-headed from the trips they've taken, ears popping and eyes about to do so, under a potent foreign influence, people are at the far edge of themselves in airports, ready to break down or through. You see strangers pouring out their life stories to strangers here, or making new life stories with other strangers. Everything is ıt once intensified and slightly unreal. One L.A. psychiatrist advises shy women to practice their flirting here, and religious groups circle in the hope of catching unattached souls.

Airports, which often have a kind of perpetual morning-after feeling (the end of the holiday, the end of the affair), are places where everyone is ruled by the clock, but all the clocks show different times. These days, after all, we fly not only into yesterday or this morning when we go across the world but into different decades, often, of the world's life and our own: in ten or fifteen hours, we are taken back into the twelfth century or into worlds we haven't seen since childhood. And in the process we are subjected to transitions more jolting than any imagined by Oscar Wilde or Sigmund Freud: if the average individual today sees as many images in a day as a Victorian saw in a lifetime, the average person today also has to negotiate switches between continents inconceivable only fifty years ago. Frequent fliers like Ted Turner have actually become ill from touching down and taking off so often; but, in less diagnosable ways, all of us are being asked to handle difficult suspensions of the laws of Nature and Society when moving between competing worlds.

This helps to compound the strange statelessness of airports, where all bets are off and all laws are annulled—modern equivalents, perhaps, to the hundred yards of no-man's-land between two frontier crossings. In airports we are often in dreamy, floating, out-of-body states, as ready to be claimed as that suitcase on Carousel C. Even I, not traveling, didn't know sometimes if I was awake or asleep in LAX, as I heard an announcer intone, "John Cheever, John Cheever, please contact a Northwest representative in the Baggage Claim area. John Cheever, please contact a service representative at the Northwest Baggage Claim area."

As I started to sink into this odd, amphibious, bipolar state, I could begin to see why a place like LAX is a particular zone of fear, more terrifying to many people than anywhere but the dentist's office. Though dying in a plane is, notoriously, twenty times less likely than dying in a car, every single airline crash is front-page news and so dramatic—not a single death but three hundred—that airports are for many people killing grounds. Their runways are associated in the mind's (televisual) eye with hostages and hijackings; with bodies on the tarmac or antiterrorist squads storming the plane.

PEOPLE ARE AT THE FAR EDGE OF THEMSELVES IN AIRPORTS, ALMOST SLEEPWALKING, READY TO BREAK DOWN OR THROUGH

That general sense of unsettledness is doubtless intensified by all the people in uniform in LAX. There are ten different security agencies working the Tom Bradley Terminal alone, and the streets outside are jam-packed with Airport Police cars, FBI men, and black-clad airport policemen on bicycles. All of them do as much, I suspect, to instill fear as to still it. "People are scared here," a gloomy Pakistani security guard told me, "because undercover are working. Police are working. You could be undercover, I could be undercover. Who knows?"

And just as L.A. is a province of the future in part because so many people take it to be the future, so it is a danger zone precisely because it is imagined to be dangerous. In Osaka's new $16 billion airport recently, I cross-

examined the Skynet computer (in the Departures area) about what to expect when arriving at LAX or any other foreign airport. "Guard against theft in the arrival hall," it told me (and, presumably, even warier Japanese). "A thief is waiting for a chance to take advantage of you." Elsewhere it added, "Do not dress too touristy," and, "Be on your guard when approached by a group of suspicious-looking children, such as girls wearing bright-colored shirts and scarves." True to such dark prognostications, the side doors of the Airport Sheraton at LAX are locked every day from 8:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M., and you cannot even activate the elevators without a room key. "Be extra careful in parking garages and stairwells," the hotel advises visitors. "Always try to use the main entrance to your hotel, particularly late in the evening. Never answer your hotel room door without verifying who is there."

PEOPLE STAND OUTSIDE CUSTOMS LOOKING INTO THEIR PASTS WHILE NEWCOMERS DRIFT OUT, SEARCHING FOR THEIR FUTURES

One reason airports enjoy such central status in our imaginations is that they play such a large part in forming our first (which is sometimes our last) impression of a place; this is the reason that poor countries often throw all their resources into making their airports sleek, with beautifully landscaped roads leading out of them into town. L.A., by contrast, has the bareness of arrogance, or simple inhospitability. Usually what you see as you approach the city is a grim penitential haze through which is visible nothing but rows of gray buildings, a few dun-hued warehouses, and ribbons of dirty freeway: a no-colored blur without even the comforting lapis ornaments of the swimming pools that dot New York or Johannesburg. (Ideally, in fact, one should enter L.A. by night, when the whole city pulses like an electric grid of lights—or the back of a transistor radio, in Thomas Pynchon's inspired metaphor. While I was staying in LAX, Jackie Collins actually told *Los Angeles* magazine that "Flying in [to LAX] at night is just an orgasmic thrill.") You land, with a bump, on a mess of gray runways with no signs of welcome, a hangar that says "T ans W rld Airlines," another broken sign that announces "Tom Bradl y International Ai port," and an air-control tower under scaffolding.

The first thing that greeted me on a recent arrival was a row of Asians sitting on the floor of the terminal, under a sign that told them of a $25,000 fine for bringing in the wrong kinds of food. As I passed through endless corridors, I was faced with almost nothing except long escalators (a surprisingly high percentage of the accidents recorded at airports comes from escalators, bewildering to newcomers) and bare hallways. The other surprise, for many of my fellow travelers, no doubt, was that almost no one we saw looked like Robert Redford or Julia Roberts or, indeed, like anyone belonging to the race we'd been celebrating in our in-flight movies. As we passed into the huge, bare assembly hall that is the Customs and Immigration Center here, I was directed into one of the chaotic lines by a Noriko and formally admitted to the country by a C. Chen. The man waiting to transfer my baggage (as a beagle sniffed around us in a coat that said "Agriculture's Beagle Brigade" on one side and "Protecting American Agriculture" on the other) was named Yoji Yosaka. And the first sign I saw, when I stepped into America, was a big board being waved by the "Executive Sedan Service" for one "Mr. T. Ego."

For many immigrants, in fact, LAX is quietly offering them a view of their own near futures: the woman at the Host Coffee Shop is themselves, in a sense, two years from now, and the man sweeping up the refuse is the American dream in practice. The staff at the airport seems to be made up almost entirely of recent immigrants: on my very first afternoon there, I was served by a Hoa, an Ephraim, and a Glinda; the wait-people at a coffee shop in Terminal 5 were called Ignacio, Ever, Aura, and Erick. Even at the Airport Sheraton (where the employees all wear nameplates), I was checked in by Viera (from "Bratislavia") and ran into Hasmik and Yovik (from Ethiopia), Faye (from Vietnam), Ingrid (from Guatemala City), Khrystyne (from Long Beach, by way of Phnom Penh, I think), and Moe (from West L.A., she said). Many of the bright-eyed dreamers who arrive at LAX so full of hope never actually leave the place.

The deeper drama of any airport is that it features a kind of interaction almost unique in our lives, wherein many of us do not know whom we are going to meet or whom others are going to meet in us. You see people standing at the barriers outside the Customs area looking into their pasts, while wide-open newcomers drift out, searching for their futures. Lovers do not know if they will see the same person who kissed them good-bye a month ago; grandparents wonder what the baby they last saw twenty years ago will look like now.

In L.A. all of this has an added charge, be-

ause unlike many cities, it is not a hub but a erminus: a place where people come to ar- ive. Thus many of the meetings you witness re between the haves and the hope-to- aves, between those who are affecting a new ase in their new home and those who are ere in search of that ease. Both parties, espe- ially if they are un-American by birth, are ager to stress their Americanness or their fit- ess for America; and both, as they look at ach other's made-up self, see themselves ei- her before or after a stay in L.A.'s theater of ransformation. And so they stream in, wear- ng running shoes or cowboy hats or 49ers ackets, anxious to make a good first impres- ion; and the people who wait for them, un- ler a halfhearted mural of Desertland, are of- en American enough not to try to look the art. Juan and Esperanza both have ponytails ow, and Kimmie is wearing a Harley-David- on cap backwards and necking with a Japan- se guy; the uncle from Delhi arrives to find hat Rajiv not only has grown darker but has ost weight, so that he looks more like a peas- nt from back home than ever.

And the newcomers pour in in astonishing umbers. A typical Sunday evening, in a sin- le hour, sees flights arriving from England, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico, Austria, Germany, Spain, Costa Rica, and Guatemala; and each new group colors and ransforms the airport: an explosion of tropi- al shades from Hawaiian Air, a rash of blue blazers and white shirts around the early light from Tokyo. Red-haired Thais bearing pirated Schwarzenegger videos, lonely Africans in Aerial Assault sneakers, farmers rom changeless Confucian cultures peering nto the smiles of a Prozac city, children whose parents can't pronounce their names. Many of them are returning, like Odysseus, with the spoils of war: young brides from Lu- on, business cards from Shanghai, boxes of nacadamia nuts from Oahu. And for many of hem the whole wild carnival will feature ights they have never seen before: Japanese ook anxiously at the first El Salvadorans hey've ever seen, and El Salvadorans ogle leek girls from Bangkok in thigh-high boots. All of them, moreover, may not be pleased to ealize that the America they've dreamed of s, in fact, a land of tacos and pita and pad hai—full, indeed, of the very Third World ultures that other Third Worlders look down upon.

One day over lunch I asked my Ethiopian waitress about her life here. She liked it well enough, she said, but still she missed her home. And yet, she added, she couldn't go back. "Why not?" I asked, still smiling. "Be-







cause they killed my family," she said. "Two years back. They killed my father. They killed my brother." "They," I realized, referred to the Tigreans—many of them working just down the corridor in other parts of the hotel. So, too, Tibetans who have finally managed to flee their Chinese-occupied homeland arrive at LAX to find Chinese faces everywhere; those who fled the Sandinistas find themselves

standing next to Sandinistas fleeing their successors. And all these people from ancient cultures find themselves in a country as amnesiac as the morning, where World War II is just a rumor and the Gulf War a distant memory. Their pasts are escaped, yes, but by the same token they are unlikely to be honored.







It is dangerously tempting to start formulating socioeconomic principles in the midst of LAX: people from rich countries (Germany and Japan, say) travel light, if only because they are sure that they can return any time; those from poor countries come with their whole lives in cardboard boxes imperfectly tied with string. People from poor countries are often met by huge crowds—for them each arrival is a special occasion—and stagger through customs with string bags and Gold Digger apple crates, their addresses handwritten on them in pencil; the Okinawan honeymooners, by contrast, in the color-coordinated outfits they will change every day, somehow have packed all their needs into a tiny case.

If airports have some of the excitement of bars, because so many people are composing (and decomposing) selves there, they also have some of the sadness of bars, the poignancy of people sitting unclaimed while everyone around them has paired off. A pretty girl dressed in next to nothing sits alone in an empty Baggage Claim area, waiting for a date who never comes; a Vietnamese man, lost, tells an official that he has friends in Orange County who can help him, but when the friends are contacted, they say they know no one from Vietnam. I hear of a woman who got off and asked for "San Mateo," only to learn that she was meant to disembark in San Francisco; and a woman from Nigeria who came out expecting to see her husband in Monroe, Louisiana, only to learn that someone in Lagos had mistaken "La." on her itinerary for "L.A."

The greetings I saw in the Arrivals area were much more tentative than I had expected, less passionate—as ritualized in their way as the kisses placed on Bob Barker's cheek—and much of that may be because so many people are meeting strangers, even if they are meeting people they once knew. Places like LAX—places like L.A.—perpetuate the sense that everyone is a stranger in our new floating world. I spent one afternoon in the airport with a Californian blonde, and I saw her complimented on her English by a sweet Korean woman and asked by an Iranian if she was Indian. Airports have some of the unsteady brashness of singles bars, where no one knows quite what is expected of them. "Mike, is that you?" "Oh, I didn't recognize you." "I'd have known you anywhere." "It's so kind of you to come and pick me up." And already at a loss, a young Japanese girl and a broad, lonely-looking man head off toward the parking lot, not knowing, in any sense, who is going to be in the driver's seat.

The driving takes place, of course, in what many of the newcomers, primed by video screenings of *L.A. Law* and *Speed,* regard as the ultimate heart of darkness, a place at least as forbidding and dangerous as Africa must have seemed to the Victorians. They have heard about how America is the murder capital of the world; they have seen Rodney King get pummeled by L.A.'s finest; they know of the city as the site of drive-by shootings and freeway snipers, of riots and celebrity murders. The "homeless" and the "tempest-tost" that the Statue of Liberty invites are arriving,

ncreasingly, in a city that is itself famous for ts homeless population and its fires, floods, nd earthquakes.

In that context, the ideal symbol of LAX s, perhaps, the great object that for thirty ears has been the distinctive image of the lace: the ugly white quadruped that sits in he middle of the airport like a beached white vhale or a jet-age beetle, featuring a 360-de- ree circular restaurant that does not revolve nd an observation deck from which the nain view is of twenty-three thousand park- ng places. The Theme Building, at 201 World Way, is a sad image of a future that ıever arrived, a monument to Kennedy-era dealism and the thrusting modernity of the American empire when it was in its prime; it ıow has the poignancy of an abandoned pres- nt with its price tag stuck to it. When you o there (and almost nobody does) you are greeted by photos of Saturn's rings and upiter and its moons, by a plaque laid down y L.B.J. and a whole set of symbols from the ime when NASA was shooting for the heav- ns. Now the "landmark" building, with its gourmet-type restaurant," looks like a relic rom a time long past, when it must have ooked like the face of the future.

Upstairs, a few desperately merry waiters are erving nonalcoholic drinks and cheeseburgers o sallow diners who look as if they've arrived it the end of the world; on the tarmac outside, peedbirds inch ahead like cars in a traffic jam. Hello All the New People of LAX—Welcome," says the graffiti on the elevator.

The Theme Restaurant comes to us from ın era when L.A. was leading the world. Nowadays, of course, L.A. is being formed ınd reformed and led by the world around it. And as I got ready to leave LAX, I could not ıelp but feel that the Theme Building tands, more and more, for a city left behind y our accelerating planet. LAX, I was com- ng to realize, was a good deal scruffier than he airports even of Bangkok or Jakarta, nore chaotic, more suggestive of Third World lawlessness. And the city around it is ıo more golden than Seoul, no more sunny han Taipei, and no more laid-back than Moscow. Beverly Hills, after all, is largely peaking Farsi now. Hollywood Boulevard is leazier than 42nd Street. And Malibu is alling into the sea.

Yet just as I was about to give up on L.A. as esterday's piece of modernity, I got on the huttle bus that moves between the terminals in ı never-ending loop. The seats next to me were aken by two tough-looking dudes from nearby South Central, who were riding the free buses ınd helping people on and off with their cases (acting, I presumed, on the safe assumption that the Japanese, say, new to the country and bewildered, had been warned beforehand to tip often and handsomely for every service they received). In between terminals, as a terrified-looking Miss Kudo and her friend guarded their luggage, en route from Nagoya to Las Vegas, the two gold-plated sharks talked about the Raiders' last game and the Lakers' next season. Then one of them, without warning, announced, "The bottom line is the spirit is with you. When you work out, you chill out and, like, you meditate in your spirit. You know what I mean? Meditation is recreation. Learn math, follow your path. That's all I do, man, that's all I live for: learnin' about God, learnin' about Jesus. I am *possessed* by that spirit. You know, I used to have all these problems, with the flute and all, but when I heard about God, I learned about the body, the mind, and the flesh. People forget, they don't know, that the Bible isn't talkin' about the flesh, it's talkin' about the spirit. And I was reborn again in the spirit."

ALL THESE PEOPLE FROM ANCIENT CULTURES FIND THEMSELVES IN A COUNTRY AS AMNESIAC AS THE MORNING



His friend nodded. "When you recreate, you meditate. Recreation is a spiritually uplifting experience."

"Yeah. When you do that, you allow the spirit to breathe."

"Because you're gettin' into the physical world. You're lettin' the spirit flow. You're helpin' the secretion of the endorphins in the brain."

Nearby, the Soldiers of the Cross of Christ Church stood by the escalators, taking donations, and a man in a dog collar approached another stranger.

I watched the hustlers allowing the spirit to breathe, I heard the Hare Krishna devotees plying their wares, I spotted some Farrakhan flunkies collecting a dollar for a copy of their newspaper, *The Final Call*—redemption and corruption all around us in the air—and I thought: welcome to America, Miss Kudo, welcome to L.A. ■

FLACKING R

A Washington lobbyist agrees to buff the im

Ah, to be Edward van Kloberg, head of the Washington World Group and a lobbyist of choice for tyrants and mass executioners eager for better press and more ample U.S. aid. His clients have included Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda, Nicolae Ceauşescu of Romania, and Samuel Doe of Liberia, each of whom had representatives sign a contract similar to this one. (Van Kloberg's well-remunerated exertions on behalf of Ceauşescu and Doe came to an abrupt end when they were murdered by their countrymen.) There are always regimes seeking favors in the capital; all a lobbyist need do is wait in his office and along they will come, hearts heavy and pockets heavier.

When the Foundation for the Development of Guatemala (FUNDESA) sought a D.C. lobbyist last winter, it turned to the Washington World Group. FUNDESA prefers to identify itself as a "foundation sponsored by the Guatemala private sector," but it is more accurately described as a group of conservative Guatemalan businessmen who work closely with their government—a government in perennial need of image enhancement. Since 1954, the year a CIA-organized coup overthrew an elected leftist government and set the stage for decades of rule by terror, the Guatemalan army has murdered 140,000 civilians. Former defense minister General Hector Gramajo has described the military's strategy as providing "development for 70 percent of the population while we kill 30 percent." For Guatemala, a catastrophe; for van Kloberg, a business opportunity.

Washington World Group, Ltd.
International Consultants
1129 20th Street, NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone 202 463 6161/6162
Telefax 202 223-3794

30 January 1995

Esteemed Members of FUNDESA:

This letter of understanding constitutes an agreement for Washington World Group (W
provide public relations services to la Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala (FUN

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTING SERVICES

To counter the negative media and public relations campaign about Guatemala and to in
U.S. Administration, Congress, businessmen, trade firms, media, various think tanks,
and other interested parties about the reforms and progress taking place in Guatemala
as present and future business opportunities) through an intensive, three-month media a
relations program.

ACTIVITIES TO BE PERFORMED BY WASHINGTON WORLD GROUP:

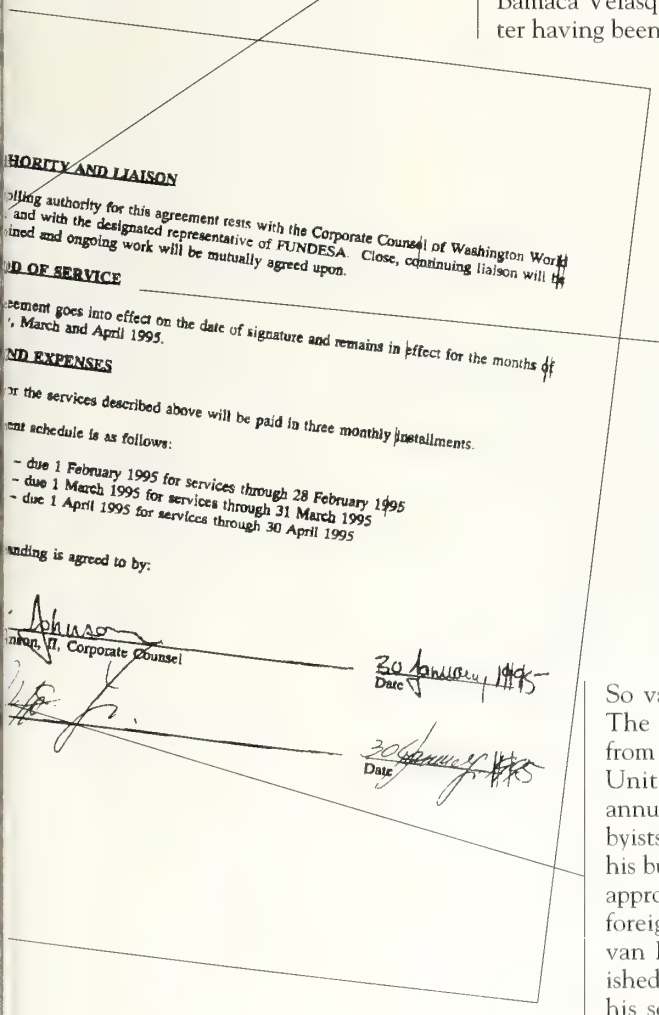
1) Write and place letters-to-the-editor and opposite the editorial page (op-ed)
influential newspapers and magazines while simultaneously providing accurate info
editorial writers, reporters and correspondents covering Guatemala, 2) Prepare re
releases for distribution by FUNDESA, the Embassy and/or Government of Guatemal
the current negative campaign and to identify areas of positive Guatemalan actions; 3
mail (on behalf of FUNDESA, the Embassy and/or Government of Guatemala) a wee
– if appropriate) update letter to Administration officials, Members of Congress, C
staffs, businessmen, trade firms, think tanks, academia and other interested parties (
public relations campaign implemented by Jennifer Harbury's sympathizers;
businessmen, trade firms, supportive special interest groups and policy institution
transition from a Democratic to a Republican Congress to reestablish and enhanc
Guatemala's "positive steps" in Congress. Such actions would provide a coun
potential decisions by liberal members of President Clinton's Democratic Admi
build essential support in Congress for any future decisions concerning Guate
Simultaneously promote business and trade opportunities in Guatemala by identif
possibilities for both Guatemalan and U.S. businessmen.

The contract is really *too humble* in describing the services the firm will provide for the pittance of $75,000. Did it not write and place letters to the editor in the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald*, signed by Guatemala's ambassador to the United States, Edmond Mulet, announcing bold strides toward democracy taking place under the current government? Why, van Kloberg's outfit also produced *Guatemala News*, a newsletter targeted for Congress and the press that somehow failed to mention that a UN mission had charged the Guatemalan security forces with twenty-seven extrajudicial executions, eight attempted executions, and ten cases of torture—all between November 1994 and February 1995.

R DESPOTS

nother repressive regime, *by Ken Silverstein*

Big job? Get big shoes. It would appear that FUNDESA was especially eager for the Washington World Group's consultants to "balance" the media's sympathy for Jennifer Harbury, the American woman who early this year staged hunger strikes in Guatemala and in the United States as a means of forcing the governments in both countries to reveal what they knew about the fate of her husband, Efrain Bamaca Velasquez, a guerrilla who disappeared in 1992 after having been captured by the Guatemalan army.



HORITY AND LIAISON

olling authority for this agreement rests with the Corporate Counsel of Washington Worl
and with the designated representative of FUNDESA. Close, continuing liaison will b
ined and ongoing work will be mutually agreed upon.

D OF SERVICE

eement goes into effect on the date of signature and remains in effect for the months of
, March and April 1995.

ND EXPENSES

or the services described above will be paid in three monthly installments.

ent schedule is as follows:

- due 1 February 1995 for services through 28 February 1995
- due 1 March 1995 for services through 31 March 1995
- due 1 April 1995 for services through 30 April 1995

unding is agreed to by:

mron, II, Corporate Counsel

Date

Date

Uh-oh. The contract covered the period from February through April. The timing could hardly have been worse. On March 22, Representative Robert Torricelli (D., N.J.) revealed that Guatemalan soldiers on the CIA payroll had murdered Harbury's husband. The congressman also disclosed that CIA-paid Guatemalan troops had been responsible for the 1990 murder of Michael DeVine, an American who ran an inn in the Guatemalan highlands and who apparently had discovered army units illegally logging mahogany. The revelations produced a flood of denunciations of Guatemala in the U.S. press, including a *Washington Post* editorial that accused the country of having "the region's bloodiest army" and called on the Clinton Administration to downgrade ties to Guatemala until the military is "no longer held immune to the consequences of its criminality." Can't buy publicity like that!

So van Kloberg had a bad few weeks. But not to worry. The man is established. Behold the stamp of approval, from the Justice Department's Foreign Agents Registration Unit, where a handful of employees duly file the semiannual reports the government requires from foreign lobbyists. The stamp not only indicates a lobbyist has fulfilled his bureaucratic obligations but also signifies Washington's approval of a system in which composing lies on behalf of foreign clients is deemed an honorable practice. Indeed, van Kloberg's shameful client list has in no way diminished his stature in the capital. The city's powerful flock to his social affairs, journalists seek him out for comment, and functionaries for repressive regimes continue to inquire about his schedule and fees.

Ken Silverstein is co-editor of CounterPunch, *a Washington-based investigative newsletter.*

THE LOST GIRL

By Tova Reich

It was not the first time that Rabbi Yehiel Berman had had dealings with the media, but on all those previous occasions it had been what he classified as the "Anglo-Jewish press," and to them he could comment in a kind of shorthand. By them he could count on being understood. Whatever was spoken was spoken within the walls of the family compound, as it were. He would be given the benefit of the doubt, and, ultimately, if necessary, he would be forgiven. But in the matter of the lost girl, Feigie Singer, and all the publicity attendant on that mess, it was no less than the mighty *New York Times* that had approached him, and Rabbi Berman had made the grievous error of taking seriously an unquestioned fact lodged many years earlier in his consciousness and accepted by him in innocent good faith—namely, the fact that the *Times* was a Jewish organ.

So when the *Times* reporter approached him for a comment on the Singer case, he had spoken openly, as one speaks to a brother, or at the very least a cousin. Because even a cousin several times removed would understand that there are two forms of speech—one meant for the inner precincts and the other for the outside sphere. And even that cousin, however many times cut off, would recognize that it is in their mutual interest to take the words spoken within the chambers and refine them for consumption by a hostile world when the one thing you could depend on was any excuse to pounce on the Jews—"All Jews irregardless," as Rabbi Berman liked to put it, no matter how distant the cousinship. The least Rabbi Berman could have expected from that reporter, a Jewish fellow named Sean Markowitz, as a matter of fact, was to apply some basic common sense in the interest of Jewish survival. As Rabbi Berman admonished this traitor afterward, when it was already too late, when his so-called offensive remark had been spread far and wide in the newspaper without commentary or spin, in a bitter phone call at that time the rabbi had counseled Markowitz that he would do well in the future to recite the *Shema* with intense fervor, to pray "Hear, O Israel" each and every time he sat down at his desk to write even a single word about the Jewish people, in order to remind himself of his awesome responsibility, his heavy burden, lest he do, as he had certainly done with the rabbi's quote, severe harm to his own tribe and, by extension, whether he



Tova Reich's third novel, The Jewish War, *was recently published by Pantheon.*

Illustration by Polly Bed

ıcknowledged this or not, to himself.

Above all, the rabbi had sought to lrum a little empathy into the use-ɛssly educated brain of this arrogant :id. Do not judge your friend until ou reach his place, the sages teach. And who, who in this world, could ɛver imagine what it must be like to ɔe in Rabbi Berman's position? To ɔe the principal of an all-girls high school, to bear the weight of mold-ng and shaping, day in and day out, :he minds and souls of three hun-lred girls in the most difficult ages of ourteen through eighteen, to be :harged with preparing these speci-nens for the critical task of Jewish wifehood and motherhood, in short, or the continuation of our people—his was the hard reality that Rabbi Berman had to face, a reality quite ɔeyond the comprehension of the Markowitzes of this world. Did Markowitz realize, for instance, that ɔy the age of twenty, God willing, most or all of these girls would al-ready be married off to yeshiva boys who sit and learn all day? Some were ɛven engaged in their junior year of high school. A year at a women's seminary in Israel after graduation, night classes at Brooklyn College, some secretarial work or maybe in computers, marking time, as it were, and then, with God's help, they would be settled away. By twenty, many were already pushing a baby in a carriage down Thirteenth Avenue with another on the way, and if they were not fixed up by then it would truly be *och und vey*, a serious prob-lem, bad news for these girls and their families, a looming calamity in fact, because already a new crop of eighteen-year-olds would be coming up, and the chances these old goods had then of fulfilling the destiny that he, Rabbi Berman, and the in-stitution he headed were preparing them for would be drastically re-duced, reduced exponen-tially.

Now, was this a reality that Markowitz and his ilk could absorb? Did Markowitz have even an inkling of an idea of what it meant to be in the rabbi's shoes? Statisti-cally speaking, in any given week at the school, the rabbi had once cal-culated, approximately one quarter of these girls, about seventy-five girls in all, had their periods. Could anyone imagine what it must be like to be living in the middle of all that? Sometimes he felt as if he were drowning in a thick soup. The con-stant smell of talcum, of old perspi-ration in woolen sweaters, the end-less dieting and self-dissatisfaction, the pimples, the greasy hair, the preening, the sudden bursts of weep-ing, the shrieking, the jumping up and down, the hugging and kissing, the gossip, envy, rivalry, intrigue, the cliques, the moodiness, the obligation to chide this or that one for wearing makeup, shoes that made noise, colors that were too bright, sleeves that were too short, for snatching the excuse of warm weather not to wear any stockings at all—an obligation that naturally carried with it the necessity of look-ing closely at these growing girls when for the sake of the purity of his spirit he would, of course, have preferred not to—all of this was a headache beyond description.

And, to make matters worse, if you didn't count the public high school teachers who came into the building in the late afternoon for the secular subjects, since all of the reli-gious classes were taught by married women in wigs and head scarves and hats, he, Rabbi Yehiel Berman, was the only man on the premises the entire day, not including Reb Avra-ham Washington, the janitor. But Reb Washington was a special case, a black man who had been their cus-todian for years, who had been so in-fluenced and impressed by the Jew-ish lifestyle that he had actually converted, married the longtime sec-retary, the widow Mrs. Halpern, and now he could be seen in his full beard and side curls, shuffling around the facility with his mops and pails, wearing a black felt hat over his black velvet yarmulke and a great fringed ritual garment on top of his white shirt. Yet, in a very real sense, Reb Avraham Washington, no matter how sincere his convic-tions, could never really be consid-ered a player, and, for all intents and purposes, he, Rabbi Yehiel Berman, was the only male on the scene.

So when the Singer girl had got-ten lost that spring during the Lag B'Omer outing, when she had not come out of the woods after wander-ing for over an hour with all the other girls, when she had not re-turned to the buses waiting in the parking lot, when, to the rabbi's ut-ter astonishment, the disappearance of this skinny little girl had inspired the extraordinary spectacle of swarms of Hasidim in black garb from Massachusetts to Maryland, as well as other—secular—men, de-scending on these woods in upstate New York in search of this female and the whole business had become big news, this guy Markowitz from the *Times* naturally sought out Rab-bi Berman, as the principal of the school, for a comment. Markowitz's attitude had been openly hostile and confrontational from the outset. Wasn't the rabbi aware that this particular forest was notoriously confusing, complex, overgrown, filled with traps and illusions? How could he have allowed such young and vulnerable girls to wander in there alone? What form of supervi-sion had been provided for these students, city girls that they were, innocent entirely of raw nature?

And even though Rabbi Berman knew that a wise man answers the first question first and the second second, everything in order, he has-tened, in this instance, to take on at once the final query for which he had a ready response. There were fif-teen chaperons in charge of the girls, he told Markowitz proudly, trained teachers from our school, one adult per every group of twenty adoles-cents. He did not add that the wom-en had most likely remained in the parking lot, chatting in clumps—chatting, as usual, about this and that, about children, about where to get the best prices, comparing out-fits—while the girls went off into the woods. He assumed that this had been the case, based on his past ex-perience observing teachers in the yard overseeing students during free time, but why should he have volun-teered such compromising informa-tion to Markowitz if he had not wit-nessed it with his own eyes? Because, naturally, he himself had not gone

on the trip with the student body due to the delicate and essentially forbidden circumstance into which he would have been forced—of riding in close quarters for such a long period of time in the exclusive company of the opposite sex. True, the bus drivers were male, but they, of course, were gentiles.

Then, having successfully cleared away the issue of adequate supervision, Rabbi Berman diplomatically attempted to draw Markowitz closer, to establish some sort of bond of kinship between them, to bring him over to their side. "What kind of name is Sean for a Jewish boy?" he inquired with amused familiarity. Most likely, the rabbi went on to conjecture, he had been named for some ancestor called Samuel, Shmuel—Shmiel or Shmulik, in the Yiddish way. "So tell me, Shmulik," the rabbi said, "when was the last time you put on tefillin since your bar mitzvah?"

But Markowitz wasn't buying. He persisted in questioning the rabbi, not only about the supervision for the trip—obviously he had found the answer unsatisfactory—but also about all the other arrangements and preparations, as well as about the steps they had taken upon discovering that a girl was missing, until, in exasperation, and, really, in an attempt, misguided perhaps but well intentioned nonetheless, to bring some relief, some lightness, to a grim situation, Rabbi Berman had come out with the statement that had gotten him into so much trouble. "Look, Shmiel," he said, "we went into the woods with 300 girls and came out with 299. Now, you learned arithmetic. If you consider all girls equal, so that each one is worth the same amount of points, on a final exam that would give you a score of about 99.7 out of 100—a sure A, maybe even an A plus. Not a bad showing in anybody's book—am I right?" For this comment even members of his own community had chastised him, accusing him of insensitivity, of failing to place the proper value on one human life. Rabbi Yehiel Berman had been completely misunderstood.

And, after all, who was this girl Feigie Singer to inspire such a fuss? Of course, she was a human being—that goes without saying. Naturally, she was not a nothing, God forbid. But such a small, timid creature, the youngest in a family of thirteen—her father drove a fruit and vegetable truck, selling door to door, housewives bought from him out of pity—this was a girl who scarcely made any impression at all. You barely noticed her, she was hardly there even when she wasn't lost. It was a wonder, in a way, that they even realized she was missing. In this assessment, which, thank God, the rabbi had had the good sense to refrain from verbalizing, he was nevertheless backed up by two student leaders, Pessie Glick and Dvorah Birnbaum, who told Markowitz that Feigie was an exceptionally quiet girl, afraid of every little thing, you could practically see her heart pounding and fluttering like a naked newborn chick under her blouse, definitely not the type to go wandering off alone in the woods. Oh, they were very worried that something terrible had happened to her, Pessie and Dvorah said.

She had, in fact, been walking with them when she disappeared, cowering and trembling at every little movement and noise. Then, suddenly, they had turned around and Feigie was gone. The woods were extremely tangled and dark and moist. There was a man in there, they reported. They had seen him with their own eyes. Several times they saw him, though not while they were with Feigie. Later, only, after she had vanished. He was wearing a uniform of some sort—a forest ranger, they thought—rubber boots, a wide-brimmed hat with a leather band, a heavy wooden stick in his hand. They themselves circled aimlessly for another hour at least after Feigie disappeared, utterly lost and confused, clutching each other's hand, before they had finally, thank God, seen a clearing of light and found their way out into the parking lot.

And these two girls, Rabbi Berman noted, Pessie and Dvorah, were from the school's elite, from very good backgrounds, handsome, well-dressed girls. They would no doubt be married off within a year to excellent prospects from comfortable, well-connected families, families that would support them over the first few years while the boy sat and learned Torah all day and maybe studied at night for an accounting or an actuarial degree and the couple started a family of its own. Little Feigie Singer must have been honored, thrilled, to be allowed to walk in the woods in their company, alongside such important girls, Rabbi Berman was sure. Such he knew, was the politics of a girls' high school. If it had been the Glick or the Birnbaum girl who had disappeared, it would have been a different story entirely. Whether Markowitz realized it or not, he was getting his inside information from the most prestigious teenage source possible, the cream of the cream. What Pessie and Dvorah said to him should have put the status of the Singer girl clearly into perspective.

So when the searchers brought Feigie Singer out of the woods nearly three days later, a little hungry, a little tired, a little soiled, but, to the uncritical eye, at least externally undamaged, it was a shock, almost like a blow, to Pessie and Dvorah, and to their entire school community for that matter, and it was a surprise even to the rabbi himself, he had to admit, that she was escorted out like a heroine, like a princess from an ancient tale. Yet even so, even though this meek girl had been welcomed like a celebrity when she was rescued, and masses gathered to dance and rejoice at her salvation, and even though Rabbi Yehiel Berman observed over the ensuing months that she had begun to grow considerably and to ripen, you should excuse me, in a recognizably womanly fashion, he had nevertheless regarded it as necessary at the time of her deliverance to urge her parents to collect notarized letters and affidavits from doctors and other examining authorities testifying to the fact that nothing compromising had happened to her during those days when she had been alone in the woods. This would be a wise precaution, Rabbi Berman

ad advised, in anticipation of the me, only a few years hence, when ney would be seeking a suitable natch for her, and the boys' families ould recall the event and, naturally, they would pause and wonder.

When they found her in the arly morning hours of the third day, ne was inside the hollow shell of ne dead tree trunk in which she had nally settled to await her fate. It as like a cradle, she imagined, high nd protected on each side, soft and amp in the interior with decaying natter that peeled off and clung to er clothing, tangled in her hair, nd when she curled up to sleep it eemed to her to be almost rocking. Her parents, of course, would have ealized that she had not come ome, but what resources could they muster to try to find her, downtrodden and careworn as they were? They were not the kind of people who liked to call attention to themselves, and a daughter who does not eturn home, that was in a way a hameful thing, not something they would want to get around. Pessie and Dvorah would probably have noiced that she was gone, most likely hey would have reported her missng, though while she was walking eside them in the woods they eemed hardly to have noticed her. They didn't even bother to shake er off or to lower their voices to whisper their secrets but went on hatting intimately with each other s if they were entirely alone.

They really were magnificent girls, 'essie and Dvorah, tall and stately, 'essie with her red hair streaming lown her back, held with a black elvet barrette, Dvorah's rich, dark urls framing the smooth paleness of ier face. These were truly girls at the usp of their bridal season, beautifully packaged, as it were, in designer lothing that their mothers singlenindedly hunted out for them from ashionable, bejeweled women in orgeous blonde pageboy wigs who perated discount boutiques in the asements of their Borough Park omes. For her part, Feigie was wearng the long, drab, khaki-colored kirt and the well-washed blouse with the tiny yellow flowers and sleeves buttoned at the wrists handed down from her sisters, white socks, and sneakers. Her only ornaments were the small gold studs in her ears, which her mother had insisted she have pierced, and the gold ring with the tiny amethyst birthstone that she had been given three months earlier, on her fourteenth birthday. Pessie had milky pearls in her ears, and Dvorah elegant gold hoops, and they were each carrying fine leather pocketbooks slung stylishly over their shoulders while she, Feigie, had all of her possessions for this outing—her cream cheese and jelly sandwich wrapped in aluminum foil, her old Instamatic camera, her little prayer book, and a few dollars—in a lump at the bottom of a plastic Waldbaum's shopping bag that she clutched in her hand.

She could never imagine ever flowering as gloriously as they, even in three years time, even when she, too, would become a senior. She could never imagine ever being able to converse as amusingly or as easily or as confidently as they. How did they always know the right thing to say? She walked along silently beside them, trying to absorb every detail of their manner and speech, trying not to embarrass herself by starting at every sound and rustle in the woods, straining to keep up even though she was growing increasingly weary and alarmed as they penetrated deeper and deeper among the trees, her heart beating so that she was afraid they could hear it, a dragging ache radiating down her back, across her belly, into her thighs.

Would she ever possess the power to talk as fluidly, as brazenly about Rabbi Berman, for example, as they did? It seemed to Feigie to be a veritable gift, quite beyond her. They actually called him Berman. Last week Berman had asked her if she was wearing stockings, Dvorah told Pessie. Would you believe? He even put out his hand as if to slide it down her leg. Just checking, you know. Dvorah giggled. Hadn't he ever heard of sheer panty hose, for heaven's sake? Yeah, Pessie said, just two days ago Berman stopped her in the hallway and told her that her earrings were too long and dangly. He looked like he was about to rip them right out of her ears. There was definitely something wrong with the guy.

What could Feigie possibly contribute to the conversation? Rabbi Berman never looked at her, and ever since that one and only conversation she had had with him, when it had been her turn to be called into his office in the early autumn for the routine interview with each new freshman, she took pains to avoid him, ducking into classrooms when she saw him coming down the hall, staying out of his line of sight as much as was humanly possible. Without even looking up, he had indicated with his hand for her to sit down in the chair on the other side of his desk after she had knocked and come into his office that morning for the interview, and, with his eyes glued to the sheet of paper in front of him, he had said, "So, you're the daughter of Moishe Singer the fruit man. Didn't we have a couple of your sisters here? How're they doing? Are they married yet?" Feigie could tell that Rabbi Berman didn't even remember her sisters' names. Then he looked up, stared at her as if he were probing to her essence for an endless stretch of time, with his elbows planted on his desk and his bearded chin resting on a sling formed by his enlaced fingers and the bowl of his black velvet yarmulke tipped back exposing a half-moon of closely cropped gray hair, and finally, with his eyes still unyieldingly upon her, he had spoken. "So, tell me, Singer," he had said, "what do you plan to do about those pimples of yours?" For fifteen minutes after that interview, she had sat on a toilet in one of the cubicles in the third-floor bathroom, her shoulders heaving, sobbing into her two hands pressed against her mouth. She could never imagine Rabbi Berman saying such a thing to Pessie or to Dvorah.

With God's help she could avoid him, she figured, at least until the second semester of her last year, when every graduating senior was required to take his course on the Laws of Family Purity. But that was a long

time from now. Meanwhile she would try not to worry about it. And even then, when the time came, she could sit silently in a corner of the classroom, staring down into her lap. She would practice making herself transparent. He would not find her, he would not look for her. She was not interesting to him. This subject, those laws, were what Pessie and Dvorah were discussing now. "The main point," Pessie was saying, "was that during those two weeks every month when you're not allowed to—you know—the main thing, like Berman said, is not to do anything to tempt your husband. Like, to excite him. Men are different that way—you know what I'm saying?" "Yeah," Dvorah responded, "but still you have to look good, even then. I mean, you still just can't get into bed with, like, cold cream or something smeared all over your face."

The two girls nodded. They were passing through a small clearing in the woods, and a shaft of light filtered down through the trees. Two squirrels ran out directly in their path, chasing each other, startling them. For the first time, Feigie remembered the animals that must inhabit these woods. Yet all of this talk, the moment to which she was privileged, however frightening, however much her back and her legs hurt, this moment was stunning, like a revelation she could only partially comprehend. She listened as the two girls went on to analyze the significant members of their class, one by one, their looks and their personalities, their position in the group and their prospects, their good points and their bad, and then as they proceeded to scrutinize each other, commenting on each other's clothing and hairstyles, offering constructive criticism, touching lightly here and there to make a helpful point about possible improvements.

The conversation, in its way, was becoming more and more wonderful and deep to Feigie. And then it passed into a realm utterly mysterious, even fabulous. They began to speak in what, to Feigie's ears, sounded almost like a cryptic tongue, like secret knowledge from a hidden world. Their words struck her, each one discretely, like little pellets. He called again last night, Dvorah reported to Pessie. Yes, it was the same guy. For sure. The same voice. I'd recognize it anywhere. Yes, he said the same thing. The same thing in the same words. Tell your friend Pessie Glick that I'm going to kill her. That's what he said. That he's going to kill you. It's really scary. And when I said to him, like you told me to, to call you up himself and tell you what he has against you, he just hung up. Like he always does. Just hung up.

Pessie turned coolly to face her friend. She said, "Well, as a matter of fact, he did call me last night finally, and we straightened the whole thing out, so he won't be bothering you anymore, D'vo."

"He called you? You're kidding! I don't believe it. That's really incredible." Dvorah's shock was alive in those woods, and dangerous, like a flash of lightning. Feigie could almost feel the current pass through those two superior girls, straight to her, to her, little Feigie Singer, to sear and to illuminate her, but she couldn't completely absorb it, it was too strong, she could not take it in, at least not then, she was feeling more and more sick, it was impossible to hide it from herself any longer. Her belly was tightening like a fist. The muscles in her thighs were pulled to a screech. The pain was breathtaking. She could see it as a separate entity in front of her. She needed to go off alone, to curl up like a wounded animal in a secluded place. She needed to be able to look at this thing. She could not continue. Most likely Pessie and Dvorah had never been struck so urgently, overwhelmed in such a mortifying, public way. She could not even picture them going to the bathroom. They seemed to be above all that. But she had to get some relief, and as the two girls immersed themselves ever deeper in their exotic language, Feigie slipped away and was lost.

She found a dark, mossy place within a heavy growth of trees. She set down her bag, slipped off her underpants, and crouched to the ground. She knew at once, with an ancient inborn knowledge, that something was different. With her fingers she felt the sticky warmth and wet. The smell was sweet and organic and intimate, hers. But no one else could love it, she was sure. So it had come to her at last. It was the end. She knew its name, of course, from her sisters, she just knew, yet she never truly expected it for herself. But it had befallen her nevertheless, as they claimed it befell all women, and now there was no longer any doubt that she would also, in the course of time, die. She had been sucked, whether she willed it or not, into the cycle. She took her little camera out of the plastic bag and pressed the flash. Her underwear was dark and soaked, she saw by the sharp snap of light, and her khaki skirt, when she flipped it back to front, was stained unmistakably. It was hopeless. Everyone would see. Pessie and Dvorah and Rabbi Berman—everyone. They would mock her. They would figure her out. She could not possibly go back now. She gathered some large flat leaves and placed them inside her underwear between her thighs. There was no escape. All choice had been taken from her. She could never leave the woods.

She waited for as long as she could bear to be safely lost, and then she rose and began to walk. She wanted to take out her prayer book and pray, but her hands were polluted from what she had just touched. First, she needed to find water. She had to wash, to purify herself. There were low signs stuck in the earth, she saw, painted with arrows. No, she would not follow them. She did not want to find her way out. But what if she came upon something, what if she came upon a man, say, prowling in this forest, what would she do then? What could she give to satisfy him? The money in her bag, her camera, her sandwich, the paltry jewels from her ears, her finger? She would grab the knife out of his hand. She would lay it across her hair and cut it all off. And she would give it to him. Her hair. She pulled the rubber band off her braid and slipped it around her wrist. She shook her hair loose, letting it fall

ee over her shoulders, down her ack. But if it was an animal that ame upon her in these woods, lured y the smell of her blood, what nen? What would she have to give?

The pain gathered intensity, it eemed almost loud, coming over er in great, constricting waves. It as tied to the blood. She passed a gnpost emblazoned with arrows nat seemed to be pointing skyward. he had never until now seen one ke that. How could she possibly bey it, make the ascent, the sacri- ce? Behind and alongside her as ne advanced there was a rush of oise and movement. She began to limb in stiff long strides, not want- ng to run, not wanting to show she as afraid, as she used to do when ne was a child going down a long ark hallway, absolutely sure some- ne, something, a monster, was pur- uing her, feeling it upon her back, raining her toward him. She was o longer a child. The strange sign ppeared again, and then again, as the creature that was trailing her n the shadows were picking it up as oon as she passed and running head to plant it at the next sta- on, and then the next one, lead- ng her to her destination, to the ast of all possible signs, the sign nat said, Enter.

She went inside. It was a cave. lere she would pass the night. She as hungry. She stretched out her and, collected some leaves, queezed and rubbed them in her alms, releasing the moisture. In his way she washed. She un- rapped her sandwich, taking a w bites, remembering to say the lessing before and after. Then she ealed it again in its foil and re- laced it in her plastic bag, for lat- r. She moved her lips in prayer, very chanted prayer by heart that ould soothe her to sleep. A steady murmur and hum in the cave ac- ompanied her prayers. Only when ne full moon came up and cast a eam of light through the opening id she see who sang with her—a hoir of snakes, tangled and narled and intertwined in a kind f ecstasy. She ran out screaming. he was still lithe and spare—this ight be the last time she could

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EXECUTIVE BLUES:

DOWN AND OUT IN CORPORATE AMERICA

by G. J. Meyer

Nearing fifty years of age, G. J. Meyer was "let go" from his position as vice president of public relations at McDonnell Douglas. With a lofty standard of living to maintain, feeling useless and afraid, he began to look for a new job. Eventually he found one, but within a year this job, too, was eliminated, and Meyer found himself thrown onto the job market once again.

This book interweaves Meyer's "war stories" of the chaotic labor market—the vague corporation "searches," his shabby treatment by headhunters, the trials of his fellow "living dead" in outplacement—with remembrances of his past as a blue-collar "wonder boy."

". . . a funny, frank, and, underlying it all, melancholy journal of a painful journey."—*Kirkus Reviews*

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still run like a girl—she ran in the night and fell exhausted in the density of the forest, in a nest of pine needles and dead leaves.

When the dawn came up on the second day the woods seemed to be filling with men. She lay on her stomach under a thick blanket of forest droppings, alert, watching, her entire body concealed, only her eyes peering out, only the top of her hair visible, brown like the floor of these woods. A warm rain was falling. She emptied her plastic bag, stuffing the contents into her pockets, bit out three slits, for her eyes, her nose, and drew it over her head. They would never find her. What they would see, if they could see anything at all, would be litter, garbage, a discarded grocery sack. They would not see what was inside.

The pain, which had subsided in the night, began to mass once more. Between her legs there was a thickness, like paste. She bore down, struggled to push it out, strained to be delivered of this blood. Everywhere there were men, strange men, alien men from other worlds, worlds not her own, but also there were men she recognized, men in black hats, black coats, like brooding, great-winged birds. She watched them through the rain as they seemed to move entranced among the trees. What could such Jews be doing in these woods? Her Jews kept the sidewalks under their feet. Jews such as these—they gathered in forests only to be shot. Now and then, behind the rain, she imagined she heard them calling her name—Feigie, Feigie. But how could that be? Then she understood. These were the ones they called the Dead Hasidim, the enraptured ones who sought solitude in nature to commune with God. They were calling in Yiddish to the birds.

All day she watched them through the slits of her plastic bag, her body underground, the rain falling steadily. She felt herself beginning to be cleansed. Af-Bri was the name of the angel of rain. That was what Rabbi Berman had told them at an assembly early in the school year, around the time you say the Prayer for Rain. *Af* for anger, rain that pours down in torrents and floods, *Bri* for health, sweet rain that refreshes and renews. For life and not for death—those were the words you chanted at the end of the prayer. "Remember that, girls," Rabbi Berman had said, "life, not death." Up there alone on that stage he looked for a moment almost like some mother's child. She could pity him.

When it was nearly dark, the woods emptied out. The rain had ended. Feigie took the plastic bag off her head and, like one who had passed through a grave sickness, shook off the earth that had covered her and rose. She began to walk among the trees, the wet ground giving under her feet. She gazed down at herself as she walked, and she thought, I am transformed, no one will recognize me.

She walked until the moon came out, until she found the cradle of the dead oak hollowed out for her. This is where she would remain. She climbed inside and curled up into herself against the cold, one arm underneath her body supporting her head, the other across her chest, the palm of her hand resting over her heart, stroking her breast. She did not know if this was allowed. In this way she fell asleep.

At dawn she awoke with her heart pounding, launched out of a dream of wolves and bears. She stood up in terror inside the shell of her dead tree. A black dog froze in place, its cold eyes upon her. Who is a Jew? The one with the inborn fear of dogs. Three men in the distance started and turned sharply. In the early morning light, she could see that each man was carrying a long weapon in his hands. Hunters. They were moving toward her. They had seen her. Nothing remained but surrender. As the groom draws closer to lift the veil over her face, the most pious of brides does not raise her eyes to look but keeps them cast down. She prays. Feigie sat down inside her cradle and took out her prayer book. She never lifted her eyes. Desperately, she prayed. Like a bride.

SEEING RED

In a Spanish tomato war, catharsis

By Louis de Bernières

I am a bosom friend of the maturing sun, being early forty and autumn my favorite time of year. In England in the early morning there are heavy dews on the grass that soak insidiously through the leather of one's shoes, the temperature settles to a soft warmth that has just the slightest suspicion of a chill, and the apples fall to the ground, revealing themselves to have been partially explored already by finches and wasps.

Autumn has its pitfalls as well as its windfalls, of course. Perhaps the largest problem is knowing what to do with the glut of vegetables and fruit from the summer's harvest. One thing you can do is pile the surplus into huge heaps and have a festival. In August on the Isle of Wight, just off the south coast of England, they hold a garlic orgy. There was a time, fewer than twenty years ago, when only nostalgic immigrants and anarchist intellectuals ate garlic in England, but European travel has so transformed our palate that there now exist intransigent fanatics who are convinced that garlic is a greater part of the meaning of life. I confess that I am one of these people; I have been known to put garlic on my poached eggs in the morning, and I fully understand why the people of the island see fit to crown a queen for the day and wheel her about in a carriage shaped like a giant bulb of garlic. This is entirely sane and reasonable. In Braga, Portugal, they have a ceremony in which they pass leeks around for one another to sniff; and in Porto, another town in Portugal, they have a rather less dignified celebration in which they thwack one another with the same vegetable. Before writing off the Portuguese as idiosyncratic, however, readers are advised to peel off the outer layer of a leek and try both rituals for themselves. The leek really has a pleasant smell, and it is ideal for the cathartic striking of people without hurting them very much.



But Spain tops all of Europe with its multitude of appealing fiestas. It is important to note that the Spanish are not in the business of fabricating folklore for the benefit of the

Louis de Bernières is a novelist living in London. He is the author, most recently, of Corelli's Mandolin, *published by Vintage.*

Photographs by Christina García Rodero, Agence Vu

tourist industry. Visitors are supposed to make do with fiestas like O La Paloma Blanca and Viva España in the armpits and orifices of otherwise pleasant places like Malaga and Fuengirola, whilst the traditional rites go on elsewhere as they have always done, solely for the entertainment of the natives. In Seville the girls would come out in the evenings to dance Sevillanas, and the people of Ulldecona would still perform weekly passion plays during Lent, whether or not there were any cameras to snap them.

I have had firsthand experience of this cheerful disregard for the potential of tourism. I was off to Buñol to witness La Tomatina, a particularly picturesque fiesta fortuitously developed to celebrate autumn and its overabundance of tomatoes. I telephoned the Spanish Tourist Office in London in order to ask about it. "Oh," said the man, "there so many fiestas in Espain, all Espain is one big fiesta."

"So you don't know anything about the fiesta in Buñol?"

"I think is in Balencia. I give you number of Municipal Tourist office in Balencia."

There was an animated conversation in the Valencia office as they discussed the correct answers to my garbled questions. Yes, it was on the thirty-first of August. Yes, Valencia was the nearest airport. No, there were no hotels, campsites, or pensions in Buñol. "But don' worry, Senor, because nobody will be sleeping anyway, okay?"

It was 104 degrees when I arrived in Valencia, and the people were feeling unjustly persecuted. I was repeatedly informed that it was supposed to be cool in the evenings and that it was never this hot. "This is not natural," they exclaimed as they mopped their faces. Of course in August most of the Spanish go on holiday to somewhere nice and cool, such as Galicia, and leave the hotter areas to bewildered and sweltering tourists from northern Europe, who wonder why there's no one about and why there are actually dogs asleep in the public drinking fountains, up to their necks in water.

I was a little hotter than most, given that the extractor fan for my hostel's air-conditioning system was right outside my room and was blasting hot air straight into my window. Take my advice: don't book room 104 of the Hospederia Pilar; you will boil in your own blood like some peppery Eastern European sausage. Even in the relative cool of the streets (105 degrees) the humidity was so extreme that one expected to see shoals of lugubrious cuttlefish swimming past one's eyes on their way to the sea. I quaffed one and a half liters of water with each meal and bought more in the market, resigned to the curious way in which I am accompanied by freakish heat waves whenever I travel. In Crete once, in the early spring, it was so hot that I was forced to run like a commando from the shade of one stone to another as I attempted to admire the palace of Knossos, and the skin on the top of my head peeled off within a single day. In Cephalonia, I suffered a wondrous heatstroke that left me so delirious I could not determine whether I was freezing cold or frizzled to a cinder. I declare that Valencia was peanuts by comparison, and whilst the city snored at siesta time I patrolled the somnolent streets on my own like the mad dog and Englishman that I am.

At night it was simply too humid to sleep, so I read tirelessly, relishing the aftertaste of the wonderful cuisine. Four travel tips: 1) You can't get a paella unless there are at least two of you. I spent a lot of time looking for spare people who wanted paella. 2) There is a dish called *conejo al ajillo*, which consists of whole cloves of garlic roasted with potatoes and rabbit. It makes your urine smell of garlic for three days and leaves you feeling so ecstatic that you don't care that you can't sleep and are being gnawed to death by relentless and invisible mosquitoes. If you don't like garlic, or disapprove of extreme happiness on religious or moral grounds, try the grilled sole. It will make you only very happy. 3) If you want the very best service, including free liqueurs and bonbons, just place a notebook at the side of your plate and make the occasional note in it. The proprietor will suspect that you are a restaurant critic and will act accordingly. 4) People taking photographs of their meals are not critics; they are from the United States.

When I was not eating, I made sincere efforts to find out about the tomato festival in Buñol. In the municipal tourist office there was a young woman with beautiful eyes and a mocking demeanor who told me that I should inquire at the regional tourist office at the railway station. The young man there told me that La Tomatina was in fact only one part of a weeklong fiesta in honor of a saint, and that the tomato part was the result of a wedding that took place thirty-one years ago at which the guests forgot to eat the salad. They were too replete to eat it and too inebriated to be sensible, and so they threw it at one another. He told me that now the occasion actually begins with somebody climbing a pole to retrieve a ham, and I was reminded that in Portugal one does the same thing, except that there is a dried, salted cod at the top. He said that Buñol's population of 9,000 swells to 30,000 for La Tomatina, and don't wear any nice clothes, because it's traditional to have them ripped off you.

I soon learned that the history was not so clear; someone else told me that a cartload of tomatoes had overturned in the town about a hundred years ago and that, since the fruit was now spoiled, the people decided it would be fun to throw it at one another. The man in the newspaper shop said that in fact (and he should know—he has a relative there) it has always been traditional in Buñol for neighbors to throw things at one another during fiesta. Someone else told me that in truth La Tomatina arose out of a violent argument. What was agreed upon, however, was the fact that it had been banned under Franco, who, like all dictators, hated people to enjoy themselves. Apparently the Guardia Civil used to turn up to ensure that the fiesta was not happening, and then, after they had gone, the fiesta happened

learly, the "facts" about the fiesta ere not forthcoming, so I decided wait until I arrived in Buñol to separate myth from truth.

I left for Buñol at 8:00 A.M. on the y of La Tomatina. My train carried e at a sedate pace past an enormous cropolis, dark citrus groves, vine-rds, fields of rich, red soil, and to-ard the breasted hills in which the wn reclines. I was starting to feel prehensive about my destination sed on my observations of Valen-an tomatoes, which are approxi-ately the size of a baby's head. I was rtain that someone would be lled. If this were England, there ould be hooligans putting stones d razor blades inside the fruit. here was indeed an ominous mes-ge from the mayor in the festival ogram, which I'd picked up in Va-ncia: "We request that persons be spected; it is absolutely forbidden bring glass bottles into the plaza, destroy shirts, to annoy people th water bombs. Also we ask that matoes be squashed in the hand fore they are thrown." I knew that has always been the custom to row *globos de agua* (balloons filled th water) at fiestas, and that in me South American countries the cal thugs had taken to putting em in the freezer first. I began to rry about surviving intact.

I reached Buñol three hours before Tomatina was scheduled to begin d made my way to the plaza that as to be the site of the event. The wn is dominated by a large and ugly ment works and is divided by deep, ngly chasms containing tiny reams, carpeted and curtained in aths of blue convolvulus. Prickly ars sprout with insouciance from e rocks, and the alleys between the uses consist of ramps and steps that rm an unfathomable labyrinth, out which there is no escape unless you ngle-mindedly decide to take any ute that goes downward. To climb ck up, you need iron lungs and the lf muscles of an Andean Inca.

It was clear when I arrived that ople had already made prepara-ns for the festivities: the houses ng the only important street were

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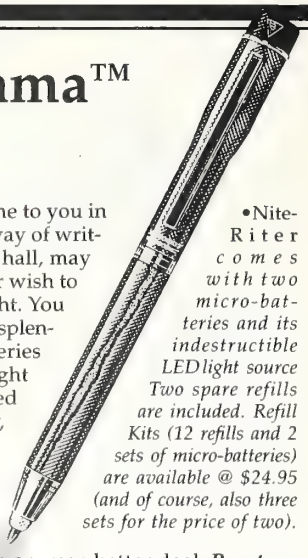
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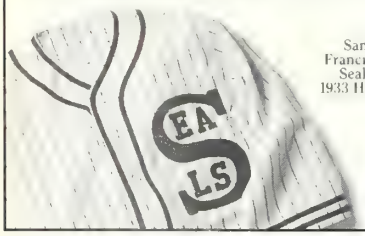
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draped with plastic sheeting. I planted myself in the middle of the tiny plaza and continued my study of the fiesta program. It revealed that the week's festivities were, most curiously, like any village fete in England, though much scaled-up and with greater emphasis upon bands and orchestras. Just as in Britain, there was a committee of efficient women in charge of the whole event, curious sports, fireworks, karaoke, football, a procession of carts, junior and senior fishing contests, a chess competition, a dog-obedience trial, tennis, cycling, and twenty-four-hour Ping-Pong. In England we would have competitions for cake and jam and fruit rather than for paella and gazpacho, and we would place less emphasis upon religion. We might raise money by throwing wet sponges at the vicar, while in Buñol there are processions and offerings of fruit and flowers to St. Luis Beltrán and Our Lady of the Unprotected. Buñol is also superior in that it has not only a fiesta queen (this year it was Senorita Maria Eugenia Estepa Saez) but no fewer than fourteen beautiful and implacably wholesome maids of honor. I would have married all of them on the spot, either simultaneously or in sequence.

The plaza filled up slowly, and soon the whole street was packed in both directions, mainly with the youth of both sexes in about equal numbers but also with tiny children and intrepid representatives of older generations. Behind me two little boys filled a plastic bag with water from the public drinking fountain, swung it about their heads, and soaked me from head to foot. As it was again 104 degrees, I was profoundly grateful, and anyway I knew that I would be able to get them later. Next to me a group of friends began to tear one another's T-shirts. I moved away a little. A band of people with painted faces stretched banners across the street in order to protest a toxic-waste incinerator. A disabled man in a wheelchair passed by with a plastic bucket sensibly planted atop his head. A man in a bandanna ambushed a policeman and stole his badge. There ensued a good-natured scuffle, which the policeman won. The kids began to act up for the TV crews that were setting up in upper windows, where they thought that they would be safe. At 10:00 A.M. a man in a van appeared to hand out free wine from a barrel and complimentary meaty pastries. For some reason the climbing of the pole to fetch the ham was canceled, and a group of young men paraded the pole through the street in protest. Three policemen tried to turn them back but then gave in.

It was now far too hot for those who were not in the shade, and they began to chant, "*Agua, agua agua*" to the two men and the woman standing on a platform just above our heads. So what if water bombs had been specifically forbidden? The people were begging to be soaked. There was a swift discussion, and then hoses were turned on the folk below, who clambered to get onto one another's shoulders in order to be better sprayed. They began to chant, "*Olé, olé, olé, olé, olé olé.*" In Britain this is the favorite refrain of the more moronic variety of soccer fan, so I couldn't bring myself to join in, though it did remind me of aioli, which is a particularly nice garlic concoction from the south of France. Buckets of water began to be emptied on us from upper windows by kindly old gentlemen who in more glorious days would have been down below in the thick of the melee. They were acclaimed and begged to work faster. Sweatshirt and T-shirt tearing now became de rigueur, and the sodden rags were hurled high into the air where they snagged on telephone wires and power lines and the wrought-ironwork of balconies. An Asian camera crew made the mistake of trying to film in the middle of the crowd. They had taken the precaution of covering their camera with plastic, but that didn't stop the Spaniards in their vicinity from pelting them with soaked morsels of clothing. They backed away with nowhere to go, holding up their hands for mercy, and the crowd began to chant again. At first I thought that we had been infiltrated by radical socialists, because the

ew chorus had the same rhythm as The people united will never be efeated." But no, they were chant-g, "*Ea, ea, ea, el Chino se cabrea.*" n not sure, but I think that this eans, "Hey, hey, hey, the China-an's getting pissed off."

Friendly inhabitants turned hoses n us from the rooftops and were neered and applauded. We were all ysterical with happiness before we d even seen a tomato. We began chant, "*To-ma-tes, to-ma-tes, -ma-tes,*" clapping on the first and st syllables; we wanted tomatoes ore than we wanted be rich, more than e wanted world eace, more than we anted eternal youth. Chiva and Requena ey probably heard us sisting upon toma-es, and in Venta uemada I expect that les and chimneys ppled from the roofs. was like a striptease; ae authorities were olding back deliber-ely in order to stir up ur excitement. "*To-a-tes, to-ma-tes . . .*" ur fists punched the r in unison, and it curred to me that is was what it must ave been like at a uremberg rally. (If ly they had chanted *omates*" instead of "*Sieg heil.*")



Suddenly there was an explosion hind me that nearly caused my ul to leave my body, and then a rn sounded far away. The street's rrow and winding nature kept the hicle's approach hidden from ew. Moments later, a huge dump ck was upon us, its bed filled with matoes. On top of it were a dozen so tossers, who were hurling the ck's contents at us. Some of them re wearing diving masks because ey knew that we would just throw e tomatoes back. I got a tomato rown at full strength in the nape the neck and another in the est. So much for being the de-ched observer with a notebook.

The truck passed by, and I felt a little disappointed. It had been fun, but it hadn't lasted long, and the tomatoes were already squashed to a pulp.

Then another truck rolled through, and more fruit hurtled down at us. Water continued to pour from the hoses above. What had been a generous shower of tomatoes suddenly became an alarming hailstorm. I tried to be clever and catch the ones that had my number on them but very soon gave up. One tomato after another crushed itself against every part of my anatomy, some with a sharp stinging *slap* and others with a decadent and relaxed *sper-losh*. I realized that there was absolutely not the slightest chance of coming through unscathed, and I threw my Britannic reserve to the winds. I knelt down and scooped tomatoes into my T-shirt; my neighbors promptly pillaged them as I stood up, leaving me just enough to practice mortar-bombing a fat man by a wall. How much more satisfying it is when an accurate lob descends vertically upon an unsuspecting soul than when one bowls a victim over with a baseball pitcher's velocity and ferocity.

There was another truck, and the alarming hailstorm transmogrified instantaneously into a red tornado. As the flurry of projectiles intensified, it became physically impossible for the senses to register details; individual tomatoes blurred into a whirling system of scarlet curves that crossed and cascaded. They flew with such rapidity that it was like watching the discarded straw flying from the back of a harvester. I grew wild-hearted and exhilarated.

Another truck sounded its horn, a deep blast like that of a ship in fog, and passed through the crowd. Our red tornado became an inexorable hurricane. It was becoming difficult to stand upright in so much slush and with so many wet missiles impacting from every possible direction. We blotted out the sun and sky with our remorseless fusillades and barrages. Water continued to sluice down upon us from roof and window. We staggered blindly with juice in our eyes and our feet spread wide for balance. When we caught one another's glances, it was with the complicitous and conspiratorial glee of mischievous children. Drenched in that stupendous slurry, we had abolished all distinctions of sex and age and country; we had achieved the extreme mutuality of a glorious and liberating madness.

There was another truck, and then I lost count. I was sliding and slipping, I was having a battle with a pair of twins, and I'd gone deaf in one ear because it was filled with pulp. I had peel up my nose, and my eyes were smarting painfully. I groveled ignominiously on the pavement, grabbing ammunition from the very hands of others. Somebody stuffed a handful of gloop down the front of my shorts. It was a fierce amazon who in daily life was undoubtedly dignified and sophisticated. I gave chase but lost her when I fell over. Somebody stood on me. I flung pulp backwards over my head,

and they got off. Next to me an unfortunate middle-aged man was groping on his hands and knees for a shoe that he had lost beneath four inches of roseate splosh. I squashed a good two pounds on the heads of the two little boys who had soaked me earlier. I was now so completely drenched in juice that even my unmentionable parts began to sting horribly. My shoes were full; I had become one vast squelching mound of pulped tomato. A girl next to me burst into tears because someone had hurled a tomato into the side of her head at close range, and she was led away by a friend. I joined in the general effort to pelt the TV crews in the upper windows and balconies, and was in turn splatted by those behind me on the wall above the fountain. Seminaked bodies in ripped and rended clothing whirled and wheeled and fought and collided. It was merciless; it was all against all without fear or favor. I could not recall ever having had so much fun.

The program said that at 1300 hours there would be a cleanup followed by a "siesta popular," and accordingly there was another startling explosion at exactly one o'clock. To my amazement we all stopped fighting. I had assumed that we would be too far gone in hysteria and bacchanalian frenzy to obey any signal from the authorities, but the truth was that after an hour of total war we all were wholly exhausted. We stopped kicking slush at one another and returned to a normal state of consciousness, only to be astounded and amazed by the scene that we thousands had created among us. Anyone who has seen *Apocalypse Now* will remember the parts where everybody and everything is soaked in blood and gore. That is nothing compared with what we now beheld. The houses were splattered up to the roofs with tags of peel and flakes of flesh. Beneath us the street ran above our ankles with tomato puree. It was a sight from a slaughterhouse, a true picture of a prodigious biblical massacre, a benign catastrophe of epic scale.

People emerged with implements that looked like giant croupier's pushers and began to shove the copious pink slush down into the sewers. I took off my shirt and wrung a torrent from it. Some of us were helpfully hosed down by the folk who came out to clean their streets and houses, but somehow I missed out. And then there was a miracle, no doubt wrought by St. Luis Beltrán himself, a miracle that passed me by, I suppose, because I am not a Catholic. The crowd actually disappeared and then reappeared in sparkling clean clothes. I was dumbfounded. I was the only one left who was caked from bald crown to soggy shoelace in congealed fruit, and I was, as the Spanish saying goes, caught with my arse in the air.

I am used to feeling ridiculous (I have two sisters, after all), but I have never felt so shamefaced as I did when I discovered that I was the only one on the train back to Valencia who looked like an escapee from a charnel house, and the only one to wend his disheveled way back through the most public and chic part of Valencia under the superior gaze of café habitués who no doubt were remarking to one another, "He can't be a Catholic, he isn't clean, looks like the saint missed him. With shapeless shorts like that, he must be British."

I feared that I would not be allowed into the Hospederia Pilar in my hideous state, but a cleaning lady took pity on me and ran off to fetch my key. In my room I assessed the damage: camera full of juice, all body hair congealed with peel that had solidified in the heat, shoes full, socks hopelessly stiff and unremovable, white cotton underwear pink, notebook irretrievably dissolved, legs already aching to the point of agony. I suppose that in repeatedly gathering up ammo I must have done the equivalent of a couple hundred squats.

I left Spain deeply impressed by the Pantagruelian orgy in which I had taken part. Everything at La Tomatina happened exactly on time and just as planned—"a fabulous technical achievement on the part of the Red Cross, the Guardia Civil, and the local police," as one reporter put it. And this is odd when you consider that it was also the most consummate example of frenzied Spanish anarchy in which anyone could possibly wish to become embroiled.

It seems that a committee whose members are granted the honorific of "tomatero" provide the military efficiency and punctilious dedication that propel the event. The twelve tomateros have their own version of the fiesta's creation myth: they explain that it all began as a prank involving a salad at lunchtime one day in 1944, and profess themselves impressed by the way in which the festival now involves 10,000 people. Except that one of the papers says it was 20,000, and the man in the tourist office says it was 30,000. Furthermore, the man at the newsstand says that in fact the tomatoes come from Extremadura, because the local tomatoes are too big and you cannot grow enough of them. He says that we threw 11,000 pounds. *Levante* states categorically that the tomatoes come from Cáceres and that there were 200,000 pounds, while *Las Provincias* says that it was 260,000 pounds. It was five truckloads, says the newsdealer; four truckloads, says *Levante*. All I know for sure is that it was certainly enough tomatoes to inundate half a mile of street to ankle depth and to keep 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000 *franctireurs* gleefully slinging fruit for an entire hour, an hour that ended with all of us smiling inanely, our hearts full of a strange and inordinate affection for one another, replete with that conviviality so prophetically recommended by the mayor. "Let us create a collective climate of civility and urbanity which will substitute for the heat of summer the warmth of human cordiality," he had written in the program, and yes, we did a good job of that, if I do say so myself.

Let me work it out: I'm nearly forty, and I'll probably be too decrepit to participate by the time I'm seventy. That means I can return to La Tomatina about thirty times. That might be enough, I suppose.

ETTERS

ontinued from page 6

4) The allegation that the Internaonal Republican Institute (IRI) exended funds to help finance the 992 Republican National Convenon is false. Funds raised privately ere used to bring democratic acvists from abroad to experience a rticular aspect of American democcy and to be briefed by experts on mpaigns, polling, and elections.

5) The IRI did use business class avel for its *pro bono* participants in verseas programs at a time when oing so was well within governent regulations. Since 1992 (bere the change in government regutions), the IRI has permitted its olunteers and staff to travel in ach class only.

Let me close with a personal obrvation: After twenty-two years Congress and eleven as presient of New York University, I greed to serve as chairman of the ational Endowment for Democcy, an obligation I did not asme lightly. To me, democracy is rious business and, in my case, a atter of lifelong commitment. I ish that *Harper's Magazine* would ave been more discerning in pubshing an article about such a crital issue—encouraging free and emocratic political institutions in ountries that do not currently enoy them—rather than accepting a ynical, indeed arrogant, misreprentation of fact.

ohn Brademas
hairman,
ational Endowment for Democracy
ew York City

avid Samuels responds:

What John Brademas calls cynism is, unfortunately, the only onest response to the facts uncovred during a four-month investiation of NED. To take his charges f inaccuracy one at a time:

1) That the majority of former ugoslav participants paid their own ay to the Zagreb conference was onfirmed for me by the participants nemselves, and by the conference

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What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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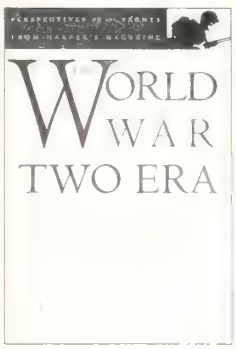
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organizers at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The expenses of most American participants were paid by NED.

2) Brademas implies that the very serious problems identified in the 1991 GAO audit of NED were corrected promptly. In 1993, however, a USIA audit of NED found "Improper Travel, Per Diem and Entertainment Charges"; "Grant Award Procedures Were Inadequate"; "Budgetary Limitations Exceeded Without Proper Approvals or Notifications"; and "Inadequate Verification of Subrecipients' Claimed Costs." No further audits of NED have been conducted.

3) Brademas admits that NED remains actively involved in the "electoral processes" of other countries, involvement that includes the selection of candidates for media training and other forms of campaign assistance. How this differs from "involvement in political campaigns" escapes me.

4–5) Brademas neglects to mention that Congress clearly intended NED to be a self-supporting body. That the IRI spent nearly all of the money it raised from private sources in 1988 on an international visitors program at the Republican National Convention is shameful, as is the Institute's larger role as a taxpayer-funded frequent-flyer program—whether business or coach—for the party faithful.

NED is a patronage dump for the political elite, wrapped up in the starry-eyed rhetoric of democratic idealism. But don't take my word for it. "Everybody is in favor of democracy," Senator Hank Brown (R., Colo.) told me as recently as last November. "The issue is whether political insiders of both parties can make a deal to divide up the public treasury between them, without any oversight, without any responsibility. [NED is] the ultimate logrolling scheme." Senator Byron Dorgan (D., N.Dak.), who doesn't agree with his Republican colleague often much, echoed the sentiment: "It's intoxicating stuff for people in public office, or for people in the Chamber or the labor movement and especially for people who have left public office and are out run-

ng a corporation or a law office
d are bored stiff. So someone ap-
ints them to the board of the Na-
nal Endowment for Democracy,
d all of a sudden they have a posi-
n with no public scrutiny that al-
ws them to operate at the highest
vels." Dorgan went on to say, "It's
vonderful, sweet deal—not for the
xpayers, of course, but for all the
ople inside this closed circle."
In 1993, the House of Representa-
es voted to kill NED, a fate NED
ved off with a furious, last-minute
bying campaign in the Senate.
I stand by my story.

neasy Rider

Melissa Holbrook-Pierson's rumi-
tion on the motorcycle ["Precious
angers," May] does much to ex-
ain why we ride, but it unfortu-
tely reveals just how little head-
ay we Vietnam combat veterans
ve made in reversing our negative
blic image. I haven't seen such
atant stereotyping since the TV
p shows of the Seventies, in
ich the unshaven, desperate drug
dict in a filthy fatigue shirt was
equently employed as a plot de-
ce: "Ah, Kojak is up against an-
her Vietnam wacko this week."
Pierson's exploitation, however,
es even deeper. The *Kojak* writers
ricatured the vet, but they did not
nore out the memory of our war
ad and our missing in action by
picting a whole group of survivors
wandering misfits who ride around
aving MIA flags ("the black em-
em of their only hope," no less)
d victimizing women. I cannot say
hether she actually believes what
e writes about Vietnam vets or
hether she assumed that no one
ould give much thought to her
lse characterization: "But some of
e alienation is real. Many of these
en saw firsthand in Vietnam what
adventure the military can be."
hat's real cute; like she's hip to that
lventure.
Pierson is even more confused
out demographics. The number of
ietnam combat vets who ride mo-
rcycles is relatively small, smaller
ill when narrowed down to those
ho ride in groups. I can imagine
Pierson checking out my Harley at a rally. She would have no way of knowing that I'm a two-tour marine grunt with a Purple Heart. The next moment she might encounter a man who was *not* in Vietnam but who better conforms to her received notion of what a Vietnam vet looks like. He makes a sordid request, thus providing her with material for a literary construction, which your magazine then publishes. For the record, there are at least one hundred times as many men representing themselves as Vietnam veterans today as men who actually served. It's a ploy that apparently works with *some* women.

Gary Harlan
Springfield, Mo.

Tough Cookies

I was greatly disappointed to see the following statistic included in the May Harper's Index: "Boxes of cookies the Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts must sell each year to cover their liability premiums: 87,000." *Harper's Magazine* has done its readers a tremendous disservice by printing such data out of context.

There are forty thousand Daisies, Brownies, and Girl Scouts in the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital; if each sells just two boxes of cookies, the Council has raised enough money to pay for its insurance. Moreover, this figure is based not on the total price of the cookies but on the Council's share of the profit. Between the girls and the adult volunteers, accident insurance costs less than $2 per person. Is this really excessive?

David Morrison
Coalition for Consumer Rights
Chicago

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I've been a regular reader of *Harper's Magazine* since junior high. I'm currently a resident of Death Row in Huntsville, Texas, and I subscribe to *Harper's* when I can find someone to foot the bill. (As reported in Susan Blaustein's article last year ["Witness to Another Execution," May 1994],

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NOTES FOR "ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT"

Note: [illegible]

ACROSS: 1. m(in)iseries; 7. a-s.(best)o.s.; 11. two mngs.; 12. lame-nted*; 13. And-re; 14. to-ma-to; 15. hotelier*; 16. finders*; 17. fa-the-A.D.; 18. no(t)se; 21. oaths*; 23. dote*; 25. m(tale*)imes; 27. c(IX)ot, rev.; 28. se(in)e; 29. in-sane (homophone); 31. she-m; 33. dis-Mal(thy); 34. occasion*; 36. torso*; 38. In(t)uits; 39. fire-part(rev.); 40. regionals*; 41. t-ender; 42. hear(tene*)d. DOWN: 1. multinational*; 2. t-m.-a-M(ay); 3. "mad" in "son" (rev.); 4. e(x)ternal; 5. deer(rev.)-s.; 6. (d)ec(k)-static; 7. asset*; 8. ed.-died; 9. threate*-n.; 10. overdeveloped (pun); 15. heat-hen; 19. iron(y); 20. althoug*-h.; 22. head-gear; 24. ex-acted; 26. remorse (hidden); 30. redie (rev.); 32. mv-RNA; 35. cub-e.; 37. raze (homophone).

SOLUTION TO JULY DOUBLE ACROSTIC: [illegible] THE MIND AND THE MIND My parents talked about our friend . . . who "worried himself sick," and my Uncle Carl believed that laughter could ease what ailed you long before Norman Cousins published his story about how he coped with serious illness by watching Marx Brothers movies and . . . *Candid Camera*.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 152, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the June Double Acrostic (No. 150) are Toby Galinkin, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Genie H. Butler, Langdon, North Dakota; and Bill Howard, Providence, Rhode Island.

we work here but aren't paid.)

A few weeks ago I read a column in the *Dallas Morning News* about the life of Machine Gun Kelly, and it appears that he, too, was a long-time *Harper's* fan. Throughout his criminal history he maintained a subscription, and he even had the magazine forwarded to the jails he stayed in, or to his hideout when he was on the run.

Thanks for publishing a really great magazine, although I doubt I'll be around much longer to enjoy it.

James L. Beathard, No. 000785
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Huntsville, Tex.

August Index Sources

1,2 Jennifer Lapchak, America's Talking (Fort Lee, N.J.); **3** *Harper's* research; **4** Bob Dole for President Campaign (Washington); **5** C-SPAN (Washington); **6** CBS News (N.Y.C.); **7** Merritt & Rooney (Oklahoma City); **8** *Talkers Magazine* (Longmeadow, Mass.); **9** Rocky Mountain Media Watch (Denver); **10** Nielsen Media Research (N.Y.C.); **11** Louis Harris and Associates (N.Y.C.); **12** Institute for Policy Studies (Washington); **13** Institute for Policy Studies (Washington)/Investor Responsibility Research Center (Washington); **14** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/*Harper's* research; **15,16,17** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; **18** U.S. Office of Management and Budget/U.S. Internal Revenue Service/*Left Business Observer* (N.Y.C.); **19,20** Federal Election Commission (Washington); **21,22** United States Mint (Washington); **23,24** Embassy of Japan (Washington); **25** Ellen Barry, *Moscow Times* (Moscow); **26** British Information Services (N.Y.C.); **27** *The Sunday Times* (London); **28** *Le Monde* (Paris); **29** Vatican Embassy (Washington); **30** Army Corps of Engineers (Mobile, Ala.); **31** Greenpeace International (Washington); **32** Boston Consulting Group (Boston); **33** Russian Research Center (Cambridge, Mass.); **34** *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles); **35** Call of the Wind (Ventura, Calif.); **36** Ramo City Ventures Ltd. (Sydney, Australia); **37** Deming Chamber of Commerce (Deming, N.Mex.); **38** George Craig, University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame, Ind.); **39** DEJAY Corp. (Greeneville, Tenn.).

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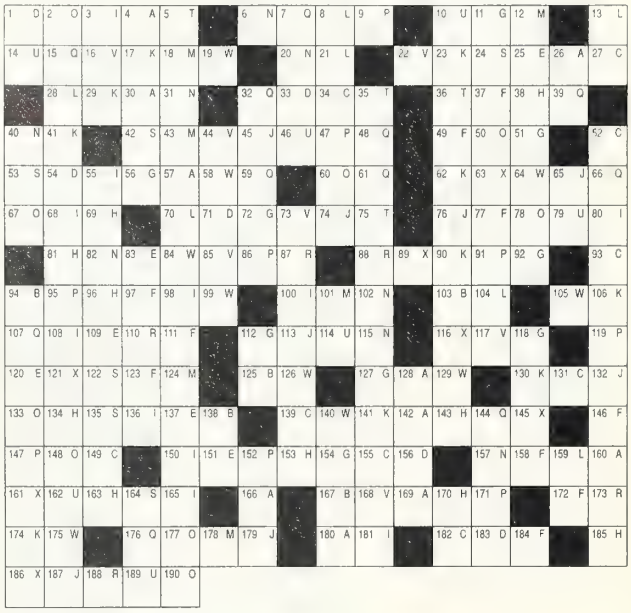
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 152

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 76.



CLUES

WORDS

A. Arrowroot or roux, e.g. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 142 128 180 4 30 26 160 ___ ___ ___ 166 57 169

B. Swedish folk dance in three-quarter time ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 138 94 167 103 125

C. Frisky waves ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 131 182 34 149 93 139 155 ___ ___ 52 27

D. Moralizing discourse ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 33 54 1 183 71 156

E. Bid, attract, tempt ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 109 83 151 25 137 120

F. "____ by great men reached and kept" (2 wds.; Longfellow, "The Ladder of St. Augustine") ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 146 158 123 172 77 97 111 37 ___ ___ 49 184

G. Good, meritorious ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 118 92 127 56 72 11 112 154 ___ 51

H. Deserted, abandoned (3 wds.) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 163 69 134 81 38 96 143 153 ___ ___ 185 170

I. Type of seedless citrus (2 wds.) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 80 68 55 136 108 150 3 100 ___ ___ ___ 181 165 98

J. Brief underpants for women, esp. of the '20s and '30s ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 76 65 113 179 187 45 132 74

K. Summering ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 41 62 130 23 174 90 17 29 ___ ___ 106 141

L. Very; in a manner provoking censure or disapproval ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 70 13 21 159 28 8 104

M. Checked, controlled ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 124 18 43 101 178 12

N. Too tense to perform well (2 wds.) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 157 40 20 115 31 102 82 6

O. "I____, and therefore want no eyes," says Gloucester (3 wds.; *King Lear*) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 50 2 78 177 133 60 67 148 ___ 190

P. George M. Cohan classic of WW I (2 wds.) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 9 119 86 95 171 147 152 91 ___ 47

Q. "There's such splendid work ____" (3 wds.; Sassoon, *Does It Matter?*) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 61 7 144 32 66 59 176 107 ___ ___ 15 39 48

R. Versatile, accessible ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 188 173 110 87 88

S. Turn to the opposite or contrary; turn inside cut ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 135 164 42 122 53 24

T. Pack ___ ___ ___ ___ 35 75 5 36

U. Former instrument of torture; cause or state of intense suffering (2 wds.) ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 46 10 79 14 189 114 162

V. "The ___ roams the great Sahara,/ Its mouth is wide, its neck is narra," said Ogden Nash ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 73 44 16 85 168 22 117

W. Supplied notes, citations, etc. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 105 64 126 140 99 175 19 58 ___ ___ 129 84

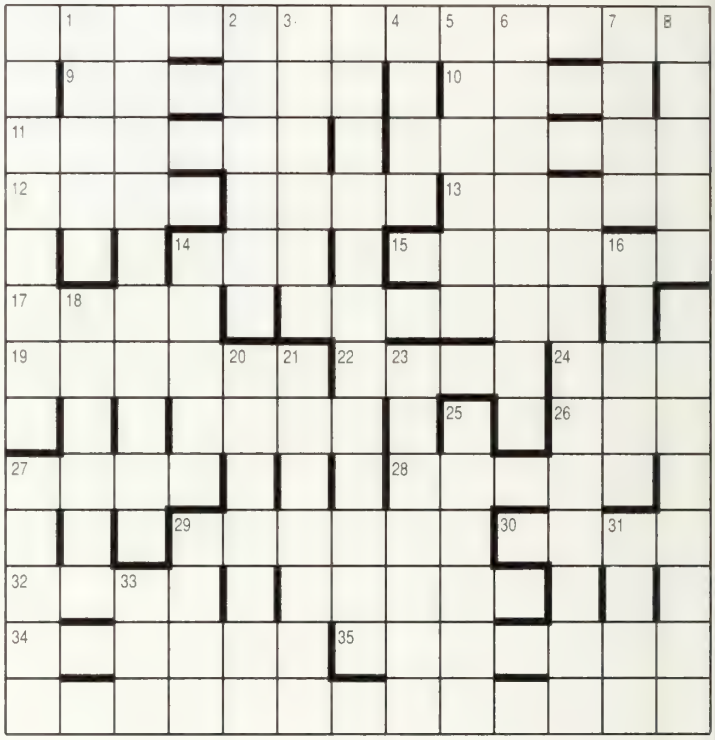
X. A modern name for Chang Jiang ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 145 186 121 161 116 63 89

Hard Act to Follow

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

This month's instructions: Thirteen lights (answers in the diagram) are unclued. Twelve of them are related in a certain way to the thirteenth. Four are two-word phrases. Clued answers include seven proper names and one foreign word. 30A, 7D, and 33D are not in all dictionaries.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 76.



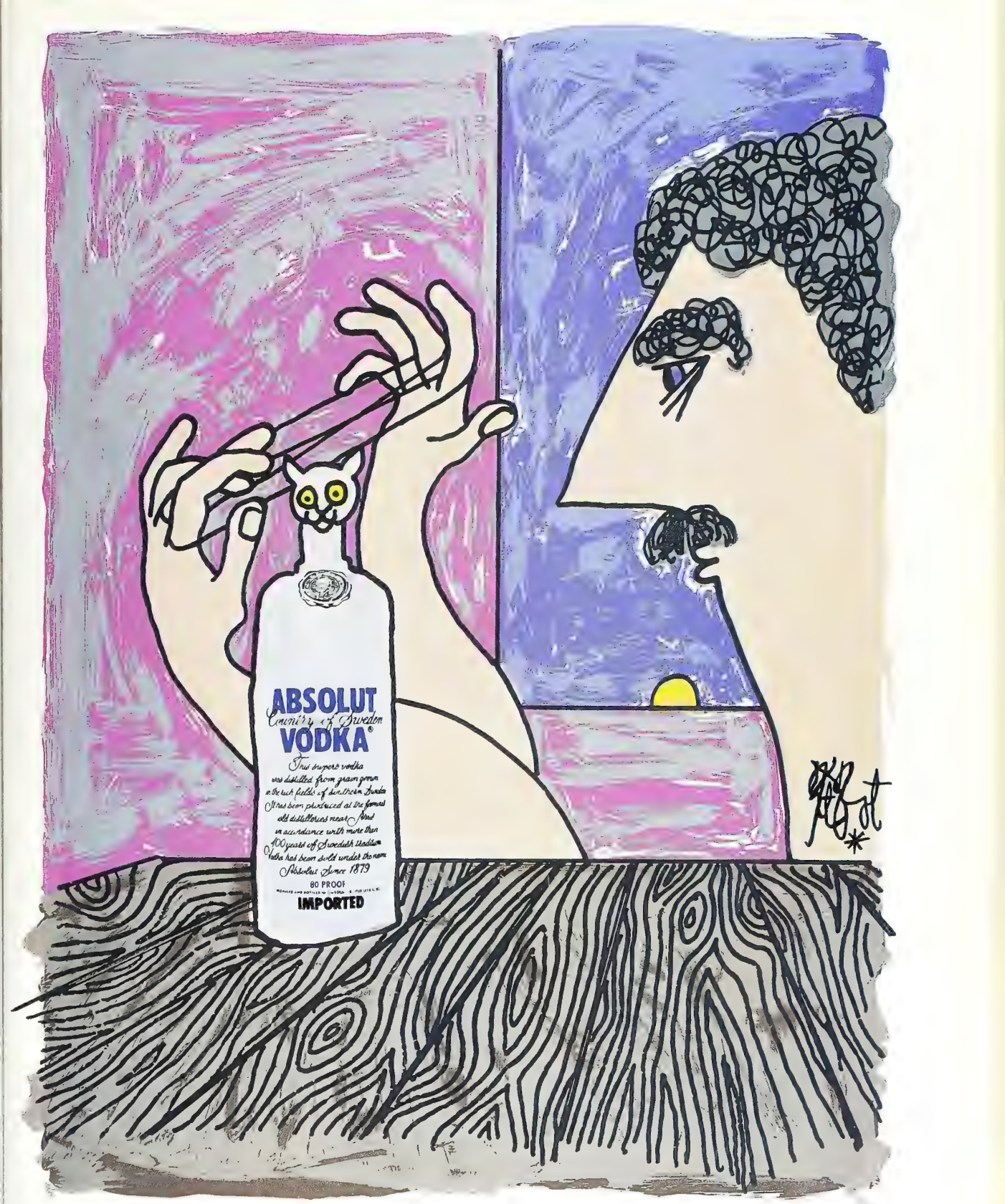
ACROSS

9. Duelist who sets up pickets? (6)
10. Erotic poet put Mother in gold (4)
11. Field Marshal from Melbourne hides it (6)
12. Raised to sound like something that rises (4)
13. Measures kisses (5)
14. Charged something at the end of an oration (3)
15. Somewhere in Florida you'll find stall containing Man-o-war's tail (3,3)
17. Free to cover an indefinite amount of skin (4)
19. Make rug lie crooked—it's more homely (6)
22. Commercials for soundly-made wood dresser? Just the reverse! (4)
24. That thing sounds like the old you (3)
26. Let out a half pair (3)
27. Shout, "I'm coming on too hot" (4)
28. Stands for money (5)
29. Two prefixes for three get comparatively overworked (6)
30. Boa twisted up for dad in the Middle East (4)
32. Say there isn't a change in the second echelon at DKNY (4)
34. Sounds like someone cheated the new kid! (6)
35. Soldiers wing English ballet (7)

DOWN

1. Earlier era of gallivanting around (5)
2. The Case of the Stolen Diamonds? One must stay cool here (6)
3. If it won't this, it'll be soon to have a place! (6)
4. Train up to be a yarn-spinner (4)
5. Performed a kind of jazz hit (6)
6. Pushed, I'm spelled with a letter missing (8)
7. Throw red king in garbage in Israel (4)
8. Backtalking fool in South Fork (5)
14. Dope ring—I had gotten caught up in it (5)
16. Dad's upset over what belongs to him—what a lousy family! (5)
18. Don't go near abandoned region (6)
20. Doctor almost buried ax in city surroundings (7)
21. I'm green off-course (7)
23. Mark off what's tied up around me, right (7)
25. Tree sculpted as heaven-sent nun (6)
29. Little squirt from pretty ketchup container (4)
31. Changing role in heraldic design (4)
33. Drink with zero gravity (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Hard Act to Follow," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by August 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the June puzzle, "Foursquare," are James Sehnert, Highland Heights, Kentucky; Lynnie Weinstein, McLean, Virginia; and Paul Hopkins, Reno, Nevada.



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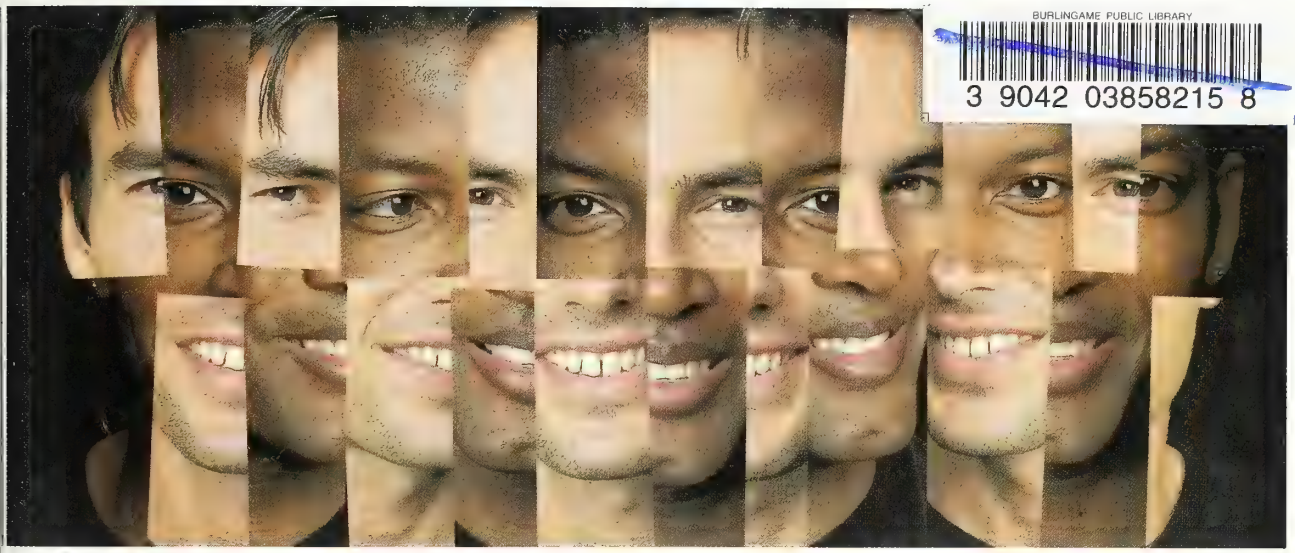

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LETTERS

Overclass Conscious

As with any war, the physical aftermath is often visible to the naked eye. I allude to the destruction of many of our nation's cities, a byproduct of the "generation-long class war against the middle and working classes" described so well by Michael Lind ["To Have and Have Not," June].

For ten years I have served as a member of the Buffalo City Council, representing a once prosperous district in the heart of a once proud city. In the early 1960s, the district housed an economically vibrant, culturally rich community. Poor, middle-class, and wealthy Poles, Germans, Jews, and blacks lived in adjacent neighborhoods. They frequented the same stores and taverns, worked in the same factories, went to the same churches and synagogues, and generally interacted peacefully on a daily basis.

But at some point, the wealthy bankers, doctors, lawyers, and businesspeople left en masse for the suburbs and turned over their elegant homes on the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Fillmore Parkway to the latter-day scavengers of the urban class battlefield—slumlords and arsonists. Close on their polished heels were the working and middle classes, who, in an attempt to imitate their economic superiors, abandoned their smaller homes and flooded into modest suburban enclaves as close to the rich as possible. The overclass then moved again—far away from these "working-class" suburbs. Any further contact between the former neighbors was hard won: few working-class families could afford to move a second time.

And what of those who couldn't afford to leave the city in the first place? Buffalo, once a great metropolis of almost 600,000 people, has seen its population slip to just over 300,000 people with a median family income of $18,400 a year. More than a third of its citizens are now trapped in crime-ridden, graffiti-scarred, dilapidated ghettos largely absent of jobs, opportunity, and hope.

It is the tragedy of our times that rather than seizing the opportunity to rebuild our cities—and thus save an important part of our civilization—the overclass has chosen to perfect its hegemony over the lower classes in such a pernicious manner.

David A. Franczyk
Buffalo City Council
Buffalo

Michael Lind does a competent job of guiding us through the structure of the new oligarchy. The mistake he makes is to take at face value the seeming omniscience and omnipotence of that oligarchy. He magnifies the skills and cleverness of the elite and the haplessness of everyone else. One comes away with the feeling that we are looking at the advent of a thousand-year American Reich.

Societies with a high degree of inequality also have a high degree of instability. The oligarchy that Lind describes may have power now, and may well enjoy the fruits of that

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

)wer well into the future, but it will ever have peace. Our society has osted a steady stream of movements gainst the ruling class. They have ways been beaten back, but what ttle democracy and humanity our ociety has is due to those move- ents. And whenever they arise, the ligarchy is always utterly surprised. ind does not expect any surprises. I). It's what keeps me going.

andy Cunningham
leveland

Only someone as intelligent as lichael Lind could be surprised that merica is run by an elite. It always as been. And no wonder: most peo- le are born clueless and are given ery little chance to improve on that ondition. A recent *New York Times* oll found that a vast majority of mericans had never heard of Newt ingrich but could name the presid- ig judge in the O. J. Simpson mur- er trial. Could anyone reasonably aim that the media conspired to eep news about Newt from them?

As hopeless as the situation is for ost, I would argue that the oli- archy is not the closed system Lind aims it is. Not long ago the very ews that he names as part of the ominant class were specifically ex- uded from much of American so- ety. Coca-Cola, that quintessen- al American company, now has a uban-American CEO. At my son's nior high school award assembly st week, I noted a disproportionate umber of children with Asian sur- ames receiving top honors. Pre- mably, they are on their way to embership in the oligarchy.

Lind's characterization of affirma- ve action as nothing more than a alliative handout reads like a nutso onspiracy theory. Erudite, but still uts. Did the reigning oligarchs meet the Plaza and work all this out?

Of course not. American society too chaotic, and most folks—in- uding the supposed oligarchs—are aving a hard enough time just try- g to *understand* their world. They rtainly don't have the wherewith- to rig it to their advantage.

mes L. Bass
housand Oaks, Calif.

Is the Michael Lind who warns in *Harper's Magazine* of a Protestant-Jewish overclass conspiracy to impoverish the American worker via NAFTA, immigration, and uncontrolled international high finance any relation to the Michael Lind who excoriated Pat Robertson in the *New York Review of Books* for alleging a Catholic-Jewish overclass conspiracy to impoverish the American worker via NAFTA, immigration, and uncontrolled international high finance?

Just wondering.

David Frum
Toronto

I agree with Michael Lind that an American overclass has taken significant steps to expand its influence over and separation from everyone else and, indeed, to avoid being labeled an overclass in the first place. The past fifteen years have seen any influence our middle-class parents had over the political landscape either sold outright or made to reflect more closely the needs of the very rich. And the vast majority of people in my income level (less than $50,000 a year) continue to believe that they will somehow benefit by dismantling the welfare system, by doing without decent wages or even jobs in some grand effort to "improve the economy." I admit to having believed myself that the deficit must be reduced even at the expense of the poorest of us. But I know *why* I believed this: it was what I had been taught.

We have all been taught a thing or two. I have a friend who is raising two children on just $23,000 a year. He resents being classified by the government as living below the poverty level because he feels that no one with a job, who is meeting his mortgage and car payments, can reasonably be considered poor. This man is a perfect example of why the extremely wealthy in this country are safe from any revolt by the lower classes. Instead of looking for solutions to the disadvantages shared by so many, or even complaining about

Continued on page 75

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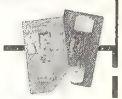
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NOTEBOOK

Elfland

By Lewis H. Lapham

echnology is the knack of so arranging e world that we do not experience it.
—Max Frisch

When the Speaker of the ouse of Representatives publishes book purporting to set forth his ieories of law and government (as ell as his notions of time past and me future), I figure that anybody ho edits a magazine—or writes bout politics, or wonders what ight happen next week in Washgton—is obliged to read what the an has to say. Last summer Newt ingrich published such a book unr the title *To Renew America,* and ver the Fourth of July weekend I ad enough of it to know that it uldn't be construed in the traditional sense—i.e., in what the peaker undoubtedly would scorn s the pre-postindustrial, liberal itist, countercultural sense—of ie word "book." It looked like a ook, and the words were in English, but on or about page 12 I nderstood that it was meant to be ceived either as a sacred totem or some sort of ingenious electronic evice. By the time I reached page 9 (Chapter Three, "Reasserting nd Renewing American Civilizaon") I began to look for the clevly hidden plug that attached the ook to a computer screen or the oncealed switch that turned it into toaster or a fan, and at page 177 Chapter Eighteen, "Ending the rug Trade and Saving the Chilren") I performed the same set of xperiments that I routinely bring the instructions accompanying rge or complicated Japanese toys:

1. Read the sentences from right to left.
2. Read upward from the bottom of the page.
3. Place the first four pages under infrared light.
4. Place the last four pages in warm water.

Nothing worked. I thought of looking through the Yellow Pages for a mechanic, but I didn't know whether I needed somebody who fixed air conditioners or locks, and I remembered that on the Fourth of July even tow trucks were hard to find. It's conceivable, of course, that the book is neither religious artifact nor household appliance, but if Gingrich intended it as a work of history, then what is the reader to make of statements on the order of the following?

> From the arrival of English-speaking colonists from 1607 until 1965, there was one continuous [American] civilization built around a set of commonly accepted legal and cultural principles.
>
> The world is rapidly becoming a place of serious and intense economic competition.
>
> Every night on the local news, you and I watch the welfare state undermining our society.
>
> Look at how rapidly Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan changed from previous generations—and how quickly these malignant cultures were replaced by American models of the rule of law, free speech, and democracy once the war ended.
>
> One of the most absurd of modern practices is the "war between men and women"—as if God didn't make us both male and female, as if both were not necessary for the propagation of the species.

The voice is digital, grinning, and prerecorded, a theme-park voice not unlike those of Davy Crockett and Robert E. Lee standing watch over the bear paws and Civil War uniforms at Epcot Center. Although Gingrich likes to present himself as an historian, he isn't interested in complicated stories or the ambiguity of human motive and experience. He is a dealer in amulets and good-luck charms, and his text might as well have been assembled by one of the Walt Disney Company's imagineers.

What was striking about the book was its resemblance to the cargo cults that some South Sea islanders constructed prior to the Second World War from the fragments of industrial civilization (copper wires, motors, tin cans, rubber tires) washed ashore from European ships. Gingrich does something similar with his sequences of historical anecdote and quasi-scientific theory. He knows that somewhere over the horizon on the vast ocean of thought, a race of more highly evolved imagineers (physicists, poets, microbiologists, cybernetics, genuine historians) sail to and fro in vessels of inconceivable power and speed. Some of their names have drifted onto the postmodern beach with the wreckage of the classical literary tradition, and these Gingrich collects as if they were magical shells or stones. Stringing them together into long strands of patriotic but unintelligi-

Mr. sound—George Washington, Information Age, Ray Kroc, Third Wave, Valley Forge, Norman Rockwell, Telecommuting, Rush Limbaugh, Tom Edison, Thomas Jefferson, Bill Gates, Apollo 13, Admiral Byrd—he composes a high-speed aluminum om, which, if said very rapidly in unison every morning in the hour before sunrise by every man, woman, and child in America, presumably will put to flight the evil spirit of moral decay, guarantee the profits of important business corporations, make safe the streets of Detroit, restore the glory of the American promise, and assure the nation's happy return to Colonial Williamsburg or Pioneer Village.

I'm sure that *To Renew America* will sell a great many copies, but Gingrich's Magic Kingdom is of as little intrinsic interest as Disney's. Made of the same kind of dreamlike images that float to the surface of MTV, the book conforms to the spirit of an age that delights in its miraculous technologies (whether in the form of cellular phones or herbs thrice blessed by Pocahontas) and assigns the powers once thought to belong to Wotan or Crazy Horse to the kindly elves at Microsoft who spin the golden threads of fiber optics and mine the jewels of silicon. Gingrich shapes his sales pitch to the specifications of the electronic media rather than to those of the written word, and his success (both as author and politician) speaks to the credulousness of an audience eager to substitute legend for history, prophecy for politics, certainty for doubt.

We live in an age no longer possessed of what Neil Postman in *The End of Education* (another new book published last summer, but one meant to be read instead of polished) describes as a "comprehensive narrative" about what the world is like and how and why it came to be that way. Long ago in the torchlight of the Christian past we could explain our ends and our beginnings with reference to the word or glory of God and then, for a few hundred years in the ages of science and reason, with Newton's mechanics or the encyclopedias compiled by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. But at the end of a century as famous for its mass murders as its Nobel Prizes, we wonder what happened to the world once governed by the telling of a sovereign tale. Like barbarians putting on the ornaments of a lost civilization in the ruin of a conquered city, we shuffle the pages of the old stories (about King Arthur or King George, about Moses and Julius Caesar and the Witch of Endor) in the hope that maybe, if only we can get them in the right order, they will yield the gift of meaning. In the meantime, we wait for Godot or the millennium, equipped with increasingly improved means toward increasingly incomprehensible ends, bereft of history but surrounded by a collection of marvelous toys, beset by shamans and stock market touts selling maps of the pilgrim road to the land of virtual reality.

During the same short week that I tried to read the riddle of Gingrich's book, I ran up against conversations, all of them seriously intended, on the following five topics:

1. Why aliens from outer space (the ones who abduct women from suburban shopping malls) have no ears.

2. Last April's bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City revealed as a plot organized by the federal government and meant to revoke the Second Amendment.

3. Whether Oliver North is the reincarnation of the spirit that once inhabited the body of Napoleon or the spirit that once inhabited the body of Abraham Lincoln.

4. Tomatoes identified as the chief cause for wanton sexual behavior, the effects more dramatic in women than in men.

5. The winning numbers in the New York lottery divined by an equation taking into account the transits of Venus and the temperature readings, at the Equator, of the Humboldt Current.

Twenty years ago I might have gone to the trouble of making the counterarguments, appealing to the laws of probability or the lessons of history, but in the faces of my info mants (among them a straw-hatte man in a seersucker suit, two wome in flowered dresses, a scholar po sessed of a degree from Harvard) could read the signs of settled belie and I knew that I might as well a gue with an elm tree, or with Gi grich's conviction that before 196 America was a postcard engraved b Currier and Ives, that not until th late twentieth century did it occu to the nations of the earth to engag in "serious and intense economi competition."

To the extent that more peopl become more frightened of a futur that looks a good deal less benig than the one promoted by the Re publican Congress, we exchange th force of our own thought for th power of supernatural machine Doctors of advanced medicine sen their patients to the MRI and CAT scan units in much the same wa that Aztec priests brought maide girls to the deadly altars of Tenoch titlán, and no businessman dares em bark upon the voyage of financia speculation without first acquiring telecommunications capacity so om niscient as to strike terror into th software of his enemies. Let the hig school administrator order compute terminals for the sophomore clas and, lo and behold, five hundred stu dents, heretofore illiterate, have be come educated. Let the money mar ager mumble the holy words tha rhyme with "onics" or "echnics," an lo, the investor has become both ric and wise. In the nation's better shop ping malls, the pornographers set u their massage parlors behind neo signs that promise "Compusex" c "Erotics, Ltd.," and on Broadway th successful musicals depend for the applause on brightly burnished danc numbers remarkable for what Arlen Croce once called their "pitiless ene gy." The interest centers on the com plexity of the lights and the speed c the set changes. The same can be sai of the popular movies and televisio serials in which the protagonist turn out to be an automobile, a robot, or mask. Sensitive to the desperate wis for demigods among the consumers c ready-made myth, the producers c expensive action movies forge th

ersona of the American hero into an luminum object impervious to reentry speeds and the heat of the sun.

Hardly anybody knows how to ender human character or construct coherent narrative. The human acors invariably make a mess of nings, and were it not for the goodess of a machine (or an old wolf or ne starship *Enterprise*), the poor saps ever would win safely through to ne IBM commercial. Always it is ne technique that counts—the sevnty-four modules and twenty-nine nctions, the speed of transmission, ne seven studio cameras, the placng of the stadium amplifiers, the elicacy of the microphones, the igh gloss on the metal. In *To Renew merica*, Gingrich achieves the bligatory technological effect by romoting to the status of valves or uel injectors the "six major hanges," the "five basic principles," ne "three essential reasons" that oprate the engine of social change. When the intended miracle fails to ake place—because the systems on't work, or the computer proams prove to be utterly devoid of neaning, or the radar in the B-2 omber can't tell the difference beween a mountain and a cloud—the elievers keep their faith intact by ointing to the messy sludge of huan emotion that clogs up the orkings of the utopian machinery.

Consistent with the slogan "Nobody Beats the Wiz," both the Republican Congress and the Democratic President recommend an lectronic device (a.k.a. "the V-hip") as the best means of preservng our dwindling stocks of moral irtue. Their suggestions followed ast summer's flurry of worried peeches about the country's contining loss of innocence. Speaking on ne subject in late May in Los Angeles, Senator Robert Dole, the Republican majority leader, blamed the asualties on the news and enterainment media that corrupt the inocent American public with images f sex and violence. "Nightmares of epravity," he said, ". . . that undermine our character as a nation." resident Clinton seconded the motion in Nashville on July 9 ("If we're going to change the American culture, we have to somehow change the media culture") and endorsed a congressional proposal requiring the makers of television sets to install a computer chip capable of blocking out programs tinged with the mark of violence. The technique refers the questions of conscience to particles of magic sand that purify the air, deliver us from evil, and lead us out of temptation and away from the valley of the shadow of death. Carry the research to the next stage of development and with any luck, possibly in time for next year's presidential election, the candidates will be offering corrections for the entire catalogue of human folly and error—microchips that change the *Baywatch* girls into nuns, an L-chip in the library scanning out the intellectual crimes committed by liberal or Marxist authors, R-chips that remove the stains of racism, chips that promote international trade, dissolve the images of adultery into a blur of white static, accept or delete the signals sent by competing astrologers and shopping networks. Morality is a home appliance—like a refrigerator or Gingrich's book—that can be installed in one or more rooms in the house and probably, once the manufacturers learn the rules of the market, in different colors, designs, and wood finishes.

Maybe if we work long enough and hard enough—drawing upon the labor of the newly unemployed and following the architectural designs of the late Albert Speer—we might manage to enclose the whole of the country in a perfect vacuum. So bold a Republican project might strike the fancy of the moralists and hygienists seeking to purify the American body politic, and I can imagine it as a boon to the defense industries depressed by the absence of Star Wars. But even though I'm sure that we could assume the blessing of Pat Robertson and the advice of Alvin Toffler, I'm not sure that we could guarantee the necessary standards of maintenance. Somebody in Cleveland or Texarkana might forget to close a window or a door. ■

"A stunning account of five brilliant and talented women who insisted on nothing less than full success."

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ANDREA GABOR

Einstein's Wife



Art by Joanie Schwarz

Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women

Charting the often tangled territory in which love and ambition intersect, Gabor reveals intimate portraits of five women who struggled to balance their careers and marriages to men whose prominence threatened to overshadow their own.

Mileva Maric ✕ *Albert Einstein*
Lee Krasner ✕ *Jackson Pollock*
Maria Goeppert Mayer ✕ *Joseph Mayer*
Denise Scott Brown ✕ *Robert Venturi*
Sandra Day O'Connor ✕ *John O'Connor*

In bookstores now from VIKING


HOW I GOT HERE - ROLL CREDITS:
Roxie Theatre, aisle seat
every Saturday.
Wrote Oscar acceptance
speech, age 8.
"The Godfather I and II
18 times.
"The Godfather III," on
Student Loan,
First Interstate Bank.
ROBYN LATTAKER, FILM
STUDENT, ART CENTER
COLLEGE OF DESIGN.
YOU &
First Interstate Ba

HARPER'S INDEX

Days after the Pentagon announced in June that it didn't need more Stealth bombers that the House voted to fund more : 10

Estimated Pentagon spending on U.S. military base closures since 1988 : $14,900,000,000

Total Pentagon savings from base closures since then : $300,000,000

Federal payments made last year to government employees who resigned as part of a downsizing program : $912,000,000

Federal salaries paid last year to newly hired government employees : $780,689,202

Average percentage change in the salary of an American who changed jobs during the last recession : –22

Estimated percentage of all U.S. felony defendants who cannot afford to hire their own lawyer : 85

Number of U.S. prisoners since 1976 whose death sentences have been overturned : 60

Chances that a black resident of South Dakota is in prison : 1 in 10

Percentage of all criminal defendants in Japan who are found guilty : 99

Percentage of all murders in Colombia that result in a conviction : 3

Number of political parties to which the new mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, has ever belonged : 0

Number of independent candidates not included on the ballot during Haiti's elections in June : 112

Weeks after the peso collapsed that former Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari joined the board of Dow Jones : 4

Weeks after his appointment last fall that Mexico's former secretary of education admitted he had no college degree : 6

ours it took six residents of a Washington town to renovate a local intersection after waiting ten years for the state to do it : 6

Ratio of the median U.S. waiting period for a human liver transplant to the amount of time Mickey Mantle waited : 74:1

Age of Pocahontas at her death, in 1617 : 21

Average number of acres of Arizona's Sonora Desert "developed" each day this year : 24

Chances that a U.S. public school is structurally "less than adequate," according to the General Accounting Office : 1 in 3

Chances that an American seventeen-year-old can express $^{9}/_{100}$ as a percentage : 1 in 2

Percentage change in real dollars, since 1984, in the average tuition at a U.S. private college : +47

Percentage change in the average tuition at a public college : +60

Ratio of Harvard University's annual budget to the GDP of Rwanda : 1:1

Change since 1981 in Saudi Arabia's ranking among countries with the largest cash reserves : –31

Projected cost of providing Israel's most remote West Bank settlements with roads bypassing Arab towns : $20,000,000

Number of Holocaust victims baptized posthumously into the Mormon church without their families' permission : 380,000

Percentage of Americans who own at least five Bibles : 27

Number of California library books of modern American poetry from which pages have been reported stolen this year : 250

Chances that an American is shy : 2 in 5

Median percentage increase in penile blood flow among men exposed to the scent of roses : 4

Median percentage increase among men exposed to the combined scents of doughnuts and cola : 13 (see page 14)

Number of people injured during a cheese-rolling competition held last May in Cheltenham, England : 18

Rank of New York City, among habitats with the largest number of peregrine falcons per square mile, worldwide : 1

Percentage change since 1973 in the number of full-time photographers employed by *National Geographic* : –87

Advertised price of an "authentic" piece of a recently renovated bridge in Madison County, Iowa : $16.95

Price paid in June for a White House telephone used during the Nixon administration : $600

Number of Americans who have scaled the White House fence since 1989 : 22

Marriage proposals received by Timothy McVeigh since his arrest last April for the Oklahoma bombing : 4

Figures cited are the latest available as of July 1995. Sources are listed on page 65.
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Seeing clear to tomorrow.

It took a little push. But since people got together to develop better car engines and more environmentally responsible gasolines something remarkable has happened. In just twenty years emission rates have been reduced about 80%. That, specifically, is based on a comparison of 1994 and 1974 model year cars.

Do people clearly understand that what they do today shapes how we see tomorrow?

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READINGS

[Media Criticism]

HOW *TIME* FED THE INTERNET PORN PANIC

From a conversation that took place in June and July on the WELL, an on-line service based in Sausalito, California. The dialogue below is drawn from "The Newsweeklies," a topic in the WELL's Media Conference in which participants discuss Time, Newsweek, *and* U.S. News & World Report. *On June 26,* Time *published a cover story on "cyberporn" by Philip Elmer-DeWitt, the magazine's principal reporter on on-line issues and a frequent participant in the WELL's Media Conference. The story was based in large part on a new study of on-line pornographic images conducted by Martin Rimm, a student at Carnegie Mellon University;* Time *had been granted exclusive access to the study. Over the following two weeks, almost two thousand comments were posted in "The Newsweeklies" about the story; the postings below are drawn from those.*

JIM THOMAS (FRI., JUNE 23, 22:43)

This was just sent out by Voter Telecommunications Watch:

> *Time* magazine is expected to put out an issue this coming Monday that will contain a study of how much pornography is being transferred on the Internet. The catch is that no one even knows if the study's methods are valid, because no one is being allowed to read it due to an exclusive deal between *Time* and the institution that funded the study. We are taking this opportunity to ask the editors of *Time* to let us see a copy of the study so we can see if the methodology is truly worthy of the high standards we expect *Time*'s Science and Technology staff to uphold.

JOHN SCHWARTZ (SAT., JUNE 24, 07:30)

The appearance of this study in *Time* is going to give it a great deal of exposure and credibility, of course, whether it's credible or not.

I hope Philip is being very, very careful.

DONNA L. HOFFMAN (SAT., JUNE 24, 07:55)

The study is not credible. The whole thing is a damn shame, all the way around.

I don't really know the best way to handle this sort of thing. Reckless research with the potential to impact public policy *must* be discussed, yet how to do it without throwing fuel on the already considerable fire?

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (SAT., JUNE 24, 12:41)

Donna's right. It's not easy to discuss this study without throwing fuel on the fire. I'm not sure you can dismiss the research as reckless before you've read the study, however.

DONNA L. HOFFMAN (SAT., JUNE 24, 15:09)

True—I've only read the abstract and conversed over e-mail with Martin Rimm, the author of the study. But the fact that it's not *possible* for me to read the study is, well, shocking.

JON GLASS (SUN., JUNE 25, 22:22)

Now that Philip's piece is out, I have to say it is quite a big deal. The story gives a huge amount of credibility to a simple study that just catalogues the downloading of explicit images, an activity that even Philip says is "old news."

What are the new issues here? Children seeing porn? The availability of explicit material? The fact that people like dirty pictures? None of this is novel or even interesting. (In the twentieth paragraph or so, there comes the fact that it's very unlikely that a child could come across pornographic pictures.) The Rimm study

to simply stand in a bunch for another over-hyped, incredibly out-of-proportion view of the Internet as a hotbed of indecency and depravity.

MIKE GODWIN (MON., JUNE 26, 11:49)

Philip's story is an utter disaster. It'll damage the debate about this issue, because we will have to spend lots of time correcting misunderstandings that are directly attributable to the story.

For example, when Philip tells us what the Carnegie Mellon researchers discovered, he begins his list with this:

THERE'S SEX AVAILABLE ONLINE. In an 18-month study, the team surveyed 917,410 sexually explicit pictures, descriptions, short stories and film clips. On those Usenet newsgroups where digitized images are stored, 83.5 percent of the pictures were pornographic.

Who but the most informed among us will not come away with the impression that the study involved a survey of 917,410 items *on Usenet?* (Guess what—it didn't.)

And he concludes the list with this:

IT'S NOT JUST "SAFE" SEXUAL. Perhaps because hard-core sex pictures are so widely available elsewhere, the adult BBS market seems to be driven largely by a demand for images that can't be found in the average magazine rack: pedophilia (nude photos of children), hebephilia (youths) and what the researchers call paraphilia—a grab bag of "deviant" material that includes images of bondage, sadomasochism, urination, defecation, and sex acts with a barnyard full of animals.

Problem is, this *isn't* the typical range of content you find in Usenet newsgroups [which are accessible to almost everyone with Internet access], or on commercial services, or even on most BBSs [bulletin-board services]. Instead, this is the range of content you find on the specialized subclass of commercial BBSs that focus on pornography.

ANNE WHEELER (MON., JUNE 26, 17:12)

After reading Phil's article on-line, without seeing the full text and photos, I sent him e-mail stating that I felt he was way too sensationalistic at the beginning of the piece. Now that the entire piece, photos and all, is available, it's a disaster. I completely agree with Mike's analysis. Shame on you, Phil, and on *Time*. You're pandering to the Christian Coalition with crap like this.

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (MON., JUNE 26, 17:39)

This study was going to get covered whether I did it or not. Other newsweeklies were eager to run with it. It wasn't an easy story to write for a lot of reasons. I did the best I could.

Also, sometimes the facts play into the hands of the Christian Coalition. You can blame me if it makes you feel better. It won't help your cause.

DEVON C. MILLER (MON., JUNE 26, 20:24)

The packaging is bullshit. Phil had nothing

[Warning]

A LESSON IN CHARITY

From a form letter written by House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R., Tex.) and sent in April to the chief executive officers of eighty-two U.S. corporations, including General Mills, American Express, and J. P. Morgan & Co. The letter targets these corporations' charitable contributions to what it identifies as "liberal advocacy groups," including the American Cancer Society, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the NAACP Special Contribution Fund. The letter was written on Armey's congressional stationery and distributed, with Armey's consent, by the Capital Research Center, a conservative think tank based in Washington.

Dear Mr. _____,

As you are undoubtedly aware, corporations give millions of dollars to charity every year. Most of this money supports traditional, service-providing charities like the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. Increasingly, however, many companies are using their philanthropic budgets to support public-policy advocacy groups.

One might expect corporate contributions to favor free-market policies. But the evidence, gathered in a new study by the Capital Research Center, suggests the opposite: big business is firmly behind the welfare state. According to the study, corporations give liberal advocacy groups $3.47 for each dollar that goes to conservatives.

Unfortunately, the study places [your company] among companies that support expansion of the welfare state.

Voters have demanded an end to big government's high taxes, heavy-handed regulation, and welfare-state entitlements. With your help, we can reinstate the work ethic and rebuild a prosperous America.

Sincerely,
Dick Armey

to do with that (I hope), but it's still B.S.

But Phil, you take a hefty swing at a loaded topic using a goddamn Wiffle-ball bat. I can't believe you bought into those stats, or that you wrote them up as if you did.

What a scoop: You look in alt.sex.binaries newsgroups and—ohmygawd—you find sexual (pornographic) pictures! You look in *Playboy* and you see—ohmygawd—tits! Moreover, 97 percent of the images of females in *Playboy*, including the cartoons, show—ohmygawd—tits!

You could have *easily* started your story with a fact that you don't reveal until your thirteenth paragraph: the first-ever exhaustive study of pornography on the Internet found that only 3 percent of all information trafficked on this global computer network contains material of a sexual nature.

Not quite the "hook," though, is it? Instead, we have to wade through half the piece before we find this gem.

Studies and stats can be tweaked any way you want.



PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (MON., JUNE 26, 21:32)

Let's take a breath here, okay?

Yes, I wrote the piece. There was no gun to my head. It was not heavily edited. I have to take the heat.

No, I didn't choose the artwork or lay out the story. I did have some influence in that I argued against using photos with parts covered up.

I should have had a paragraph in there about criticism of the study. That was a screw-up.

MIKE GODWIN (MON., JUNE 26, 22:21)

You never mention in your story that the Carnegie Mellon researchers didn't look at the images themselves—they based their study on the *description* of the images that appeared on the porn BBSs.

You never mention that the researchers probably didn't download the images they purported to be surveying (that costs money, and you have to do it over phone lines, not the Internet, and that takes a lot of time), so *you don't even know* if there actually *are* 917,000+ separate and independent images.

To read the Rimm study about porn BBSs as saying something about Usenet is like surveying Times Square adult bookstores and using the results to characterize all bookstores in San Francisco.

JON GLASS (TUES., JUNE 27, 00:05)

After Phil urged people to take a breath, I took another look at the entire story, and the entire effect, with the packaging.

For those people who haven't seen the hard copy: 1) The cover is a small child with wide, shocked eyes, evidently lit by a computer screen. 2) Within the story there is a photo of a naked man fucking a computer. No, I'm not making this up. 3) Within the story there is artwork of a computer with a lollipop on it, the implication being that the computer is *luring* small children inside. The most lurid parts of the text are highlighted (the allusions to deviant sex, etc.).

The overall effect is *inescapably* sensationalistic. There's just no way that the story as published by *Time* is anything other than a huge gift to those who want to censor the Internet.

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (TUES., JUNE 27, 19:13)

If we'd had more time—and more presence of mind—we would have called in an outside expert to review the study. But I had to go from editing the estrogen cover story [in the previous week's *Time*] to writing the cyberporn cover story with only a weekend in between to catch up on my sleep. Such is life at a newsmagazine these days.

ELIZABETH LIPSON (TUES., JUNE 27, 19:33)

Let me see if I get this straight: the Rimm report is a story that just couldn't possibly have waited for a week or a month or whatever, because it is newsworthy only this week? I don't buy that. The Rimm report would have waited for the most important thing you could have done, which is to have called in that outside expert.

This cannot be waved away by saying that these are the breaks the truth gets when people are in a hurry. You know, if a surgeon does that, and the results are not so hot, it's called malpractice. If a lawyer does it, it's called malpractice. If a journalist does it, it should be called fiction, at best.

MIKE FARREN (TUES., JUNE 27, 22:43)

I like porn. Always have. And for a while, I was a cheerful consumer of on-line porn. In point of fact, on-line porn is but a pale shadow of the "real" thing. In point of additional fact, more, and weirder, porn is available at almost any local adult bookstore than you'll ever find on the net or, for that matter, on any adult BBS that I know of. Two things are immediately apparent when you look at the *actual* images from the net:

1. The vast majority (and I mean *vast*—easily 80 percent) are no more pornographic than *Hustler* magazine. Spread shots, single females, and that's about it. Of the remaining 20 percent, very, very little of it is anything other than pretty straightforward one-man-one-woman sex.

2. *Nothing* I've seen was anything that I couldn't find, much more easily, and with much higher quality, off-line. And none of it was anything that I hadn't seen by the time I was eighteen, either. The *only* thing that the net offers any kid that isn't available to them already is convenience. And not a lot of that—getting access to Usenet groups is easy, getting the chops together to download images can be far from simple. And, of course, access to the adult BBSs is, by and large, restricted to adults in exactly the same manner as mail-order purchases of porn are.

JON D. KATZ (WED., JUNE 28, 19:25)

The Rimm study is sure starting to smell bad. Philip, is *Time* having any second thoughts about it, perhaps with a mind toward sharing these very serious criticisms and questions with its readers?

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (FRI., JUNE 30, 04:48)

I am still not convinced that the study is fatally flawed or a "fraud." I'm not sure the jury is in on that. This was a major report out of a prestigious university, published in a leading law journal, and, it seemed to me, a legitimate hook for a story that tried to put the issues it raised in some perspective. I'm sorry that so many of you thought it failed to do that.

DAVID KLINE (MON., JULY 3, 14:33)

The real issue that Phil has not digested is this: *Time* was preparing a cover story that it knew could have a major impact on a current national debate, the outcome of which could shape the character of this country's free-speech guarantees for decades to come. Donna Hoffman, for one, warned Phil [in an interview] that the study looked bogus, and even if Phil felt she had an axe to grind, he and *Time* had a duty to conduct what I call journalistic "due diligence" when so much of national importance was at stake.

They did not conduct a thorough investigation. Indeed, even if they had (and had somehow concluded after investigation that Donna's warnings were exaggerated), *Time* still had a duty to note *in the story* that serious reservations about the veracity of this study (and therefore of *Time*'s analysis) had been

[Findings]

MORE PIE, BABY?

From "The Effects of Odors on Penile Blood Flow," a study conducted by Dr. Alan Hirsch, the neurological director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago. Hirsch gave male volunteers masks scented with a variety of odors and odor combinations, and then recorded the men's level of sexual arousal, as measured by penile blood flow. According to Hirsch, the results show that scents may be used "not only to arouse sexual partners" but also to treat impotence.

SCENT	INCREASE IN PENILE BLOOD FLOW (AVG.)
Lavender and pumpkin pie	40%
Doughnut and black licorice	32%
Pumpkin pie and doughnut	20%
Orange	20%
Lavender and doughnut	18%
Black licorice	13%
Black licorice and cola	13%
Doughnut and cola	13%
Buttered popcorn	9%
Vanilla	9%
Musk	8%
Cola	7%
Doughnut	7%
Peppermint	6%
Cheese pizza	5%
Roasting meat	5%
Parsley	5%
Cinnamon buns	4%
Green apple	4%
Rose	4%
Strawberry	4%
Oriental spice	4%
Baby powder	3%
Chocolate	3%
Pink grapefruit	3%
Cranberry	2%



The photograph above was taken during "Commodities," a "dance theater performance," choreographed by Sabrina Peck, that featured Wall Street commodities traders, along with professional dancers from Peck's company. The dance, which was designed to showcase the "complex, rapid-fire gestures that traders and clerks use every day," was performed outside the World Trade Center in June.

raised by highly regarded and seasoned academics who are knowledgeable about research methodology.

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (MON., JULY 3, 14:48)

David Kline raises an important point. Others may disagree, but I think he's put his finger on precisely where I screwed up.

JIM THOMAS (FRI., JULY 7, 22:15)

This is from the *Congressional Record*:

> CYBERPORN (Senate—June 26, 1995)
>
> SEN. GRASSLEY: Mr. President, there is an article from *Time* magazine that I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Record at the end of my remarks.
>
> Mr. President, this morning I want to speak on a topic that has received a lot of attention around here lately. My topic is cyberporn, that is, computerized pornography. I have introduced S. 892, entitled the Protection of Children from Computer Pornography Act of 1995.
>
> Mr. President, Georgetown University Law School has released a remarkable study conducted by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University. This study raises important questions about the availability and the nature of cyberporn. I want to emphasize that this is Carnegie Mellon University. This is not a study done by some religious organization analyzing pornography that might be on computer networks.
>
> The university surveyed 900,000 computer images. Of these 900,000 images, 83.5 percent of all computerized photographs available on the Internet are pornographic. Mr. President, I want to repeat that: 83.5 percent of the 900,000 images reviewed—these are all on the Internet—are pornographic, according to the Carnegie Mellon study.
>
> With so many graphic images available on computer networks, I believe Congress must act, and do so in a constitutional manner, to help parents who are under assault in this day and age. There is a flood of vile pornography, and we must act to stem this growing tide, because, in the words of Judge Robert Bork, it incites perverted minds.
>
> In closing, Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to give this study by Carnegie Mellon University serious consideration, and I urge my colleagues to support S. 892. I yield the floor.

PHILIP ELMER-DEWITT (MON., JULY 10, 14:48)

Do I still think the Rimm study is viable? I think parts of it are considerably more viable than others. Would I still go with it the way I did? No. There is nothing I wish I had more than another week to work on that story.

I would like to do a follow-up. I can't say now whether it will happen or not.

[Gossip]

DISHING THE DIRT IN THE NEW SAIGON

From "Street Talk . . . as heard by Mr. Nguyen," a gossip column in the May/June issue of The Vietnam Business Journal, *a bimonthly for Americans and other English-speaking foreigners who are doing business in Vietnam. Since President Clinton lifted the trade embargo against Vietnam last year, more than three hundred American companies have opened offices there; in July Clinton established full diplomatic relations with Vietnam.*

STILL BLUSHING . . . VCCI's savvy consultant Le Hoai Ahn recently married the beautiful Luong Ho Thu, of Vietnam Airlines. Following a Hanoi Cultural Hall reception, our own Aaron Stopak scurried into the drenching rain to find a cab for himself and two New York colleagues. Ten minutes pass, much competition, no luck. At last a bright yellow Mercedes sidles up. Mr. Stopak runs over to the driver's side, determined not to lose *this* cab—turns out to be a senior banking official behind the wheel . . .

NICE WEATHER, THOUGH . . . Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai told the National Assembly last month that the stock market wouldn't be operating until late '97 or early '98 . . .

BOAT PEOPLE . . . Charlie Vitasa (Johnson & Johnson), Steve Orman (IBM), Brad La Londe (Citibank), Al DeMattheis, and James Rockwell just ordered a new steel-hulled, fifty-two-foot pleasure cruiser, built in Hanoi, to ply the gentle waters of the Red River . . .

YOU MIGHT WANT TO KEEP AN EYE ON AL WITH THAT BOAT . . . For the past few months, builder Al DeMattheis has been hankering for big ammo to use in construction. One problem: the explosives he needs are generally illegal in Vietnam. Despite getting all the paperwork done, so far he's hit a dead end. P.S. Don't tell him your mom is coming to visit Vietnam next week . . .

THAT'S HOT DOGS, FOLKS . . . The American community in Hanoi is gearing up for a huge Fourth of July party, everything American—USDA choice beef and hot dogs flown in from Bangkok; American beers, wines, relishes; Heinz ketchup. It'll be held on the Fourth at the U.S. government property at 19-21 Hai Ba Trung. Expecting 300 to 500 people . . .

DARN! MINE WAS AT THE DRY CLEANER'S THAT WEEKEND . . . It was a disappointed group that tried to get a street view of Ho Chi Minh City's Twentieth Anniversary Parade only to discover that to see it you had to be either a member of the Communist Party or an invited guest. They should have put their heads together with McCann-Erickson's Paul Cushman, who donned a Communism-theme T-shirt, picked up a brilliant red and yellow Vietnamese flag, and ran to the front of the parade. He presented the flag to a very pleased general, who marched with it for the rest of the day . . .

[Excisions]

THE U.N.'S SECRET HISTORY

The passages below were deleted from the text of A Vision of Hope, *a forthcoming book commissioned by the United Nations to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. Although the book was contracted to an independent publisher and written by thirteen independent authors, last winter U.N. officials demanded more than seventy cuts to the manuscript, many involving simple historical facts. A spokesman for U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told reporters that "it was not deemed appropriate to have the book contain criticism of member states." A copy of the original manuscript was obtained by Article 19, a London anticensorship group.*

Iraq, a signatory country [of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty], was found during the Gulf War to be pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons program in violation of its treaty commitments. Another signatory country, North Korea, also came under investigation after refusing in 1993 to open up undeclared sites to International Atomic Energy inspectors who police the treaty.

•

[The practice of setting up U.N. special human-rights investigations] began with the appointment of an Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on the situation of human rights in Southern Africa. Next came an investigation into Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories. Then came Chile, Equatorial Guinea, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iran, Afghanistan. The pattern of country consideration was set.

•

China, in particular, is an unknown quantity. Western defense circles and the Western media have pointed to rising defense spending as a sign of China's superpower ambitions. According to the SIPRI [Stockholm International

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Peace Research Institute] Yearbook 1993, China's defense spending in 1988 was $128 million. By 1992, this figure had climbed to $597 million.

•

The Dalai Lama of Tibet, who was invited to the conference [the 1993 U.N. World Conference on Human Rights] by the host Austrian government, was initially barred from the meeting but after days of negotiation was permitted to enter U.N. territory—a moment of historic significance for a man who is perhaps the world's most renowned refugee. He was not, however, able to deliver a prepared speech to the meeting and eventually, at the invitation of Amnesty International, spoke in a public park outside the conference site where thousands gathered to hear him. Arguing strongly in defense of the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he told the audience, "It is in the inherent nature of human beings to yearn for freedom, equality, and dignity. Brute force, no matter how strongly applied, can never subdue the basic desire for freedom and dignity."

[Flyer]

A HOT TIME IN OLD NANJING

From a flyer advertising the Red-Lip Nightclub in Nanjing, China, distributed last year on the streets of Nanjing.

WELCOME YOU TO
RED-LIP NIGHTCLUB

Red-Lip Nightclub is a foreign-national-oriented public place of entertainment which is present in the amusement world like a bright pearl, a gorgeous agate, and a glistening jadeite. Here comes out a "PING" so pronounced that you depict your elegant demeanor. Entering this novel world, you can display your golden fancies to your heart's content.

Downwards along the steps there appears in front of you a full-closed shooting range with five target positions to the international standard. It is well equipped with pistols, rifles, and tommy guns, as well as the machine guns. It is the only one in this metropolis of East China. There are tunnels and trenches all over, with armed guns. You will feel you are at the battlefields heavy with smoke of gunpowder. Being here once, emotions of the old days will be traced back and the dreams of the childhood come into being.

There is a world of dancing and singing on the second floor. In the Disco dance hall, the vigorous melody is rolling over and over. Equipped with elevator-type electronic lights, three-dimensional computerized laser lights, and carpet-type atomizer, enjoyable dancing paces merge into a sea of great joy. When you are here, a soft and tender affection will come upon you, such a special feeling.

Red-Lip Nightclub is a world full of magics and fancies.

Red-Lip Nightclub welcomes you with sincerity and fervidity.

[Trend]

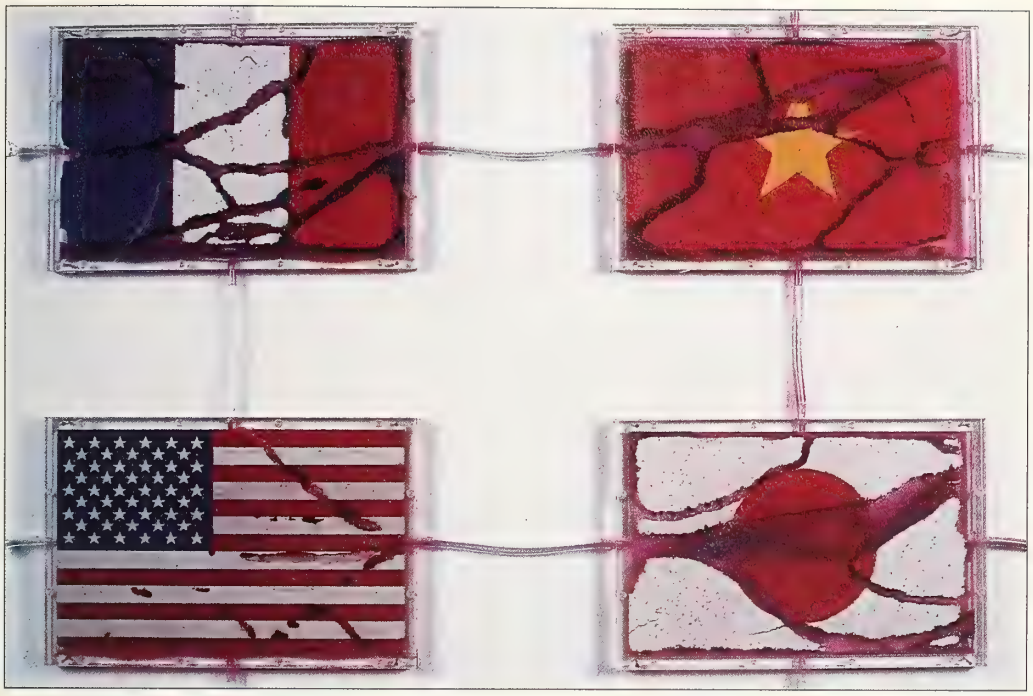
ESPRIT DE MORT

From "Au Revoir, Cruel World," by Andrew Hussey, in the April/May issue of The Modern Review. *Hussey is a writer and translator in Manchester, England.* The Modern Review, *a London bimonthly, ceased publication in June.*

Ever since Gérard de Nerval was found dangling from a lamppost in the Rue de la Vieille Lanterne in 1855, suicide has been considered an entirely proper career move for French writers and thinkers. The atmosphere of chic gentility that prevails at the café tables and in the bookstores belies the fact that this is a harsh terrain littered with the corpses of suicidal academics.

The tradition began in earnest in the early part of the nineteenth century, with Alphonse Rabbe's advice on how to kill oneself in *L'Album d'un Pessimiste*, and was carried through into our own century mainly by the surrealists. But whereas the chief surrealist suicides—Jacques Vaché, René Crevel, and Jacques Rigault—made their exits in a fit of post-Romantic doomy *gloire*, the recent suicides in French intellectual circles—notably the philosopher Sarah Kofman, the writer Roger Stéphane, and the situationist theoretician Guy Debord—have been committed to underline some point about the individual's work. What is most puzzling, at least to the Anglo-American observer, is that instead of shocking the dazed remnants of the 1968 movement, a whole generation of aging politicos and intellectuals have shrugged off these deaths as inevitable casualties of the postmodern condition.

Perhaps least surprising was the death of Guy



PETER BELLAMY

"Asia-Pacific Ant Farm," an installation by Yukinori Yanagi, currently on display at the Peter Blum gallery in New York City. Yanagi used colored sand to make forty-two different flags; he then connected the flags, which are encased in Plexiglas, with a series of tubes, and released four hundred ants into the installation. Over the course of the project, the ants have carried grains of sand from flag to flag, slowly disintegrating the various flag designs. When this photograph was taken, the ants had been living in the ant farm for two months.

Debord last November. In his rare public utterances during the past five years, Debord dropped slurred hints about his work being "finished" and making his final exit. Added to this are the facts of Debord's personality: he drank heavily; he was aggressive and sometimes vindictive; he was prone to depression. The anecdotes and apocrypha provided by friends and acquaintances to the French press upon news of his death evoke only terminal melancholy: Debord, bloated by booze, drinking at cafés in the Marais ("He was a marvelous conversationalist," said an artist chum); Debord drunk and vituperative, thrown out of a café for shouting at the proprietor.

There were two more deaths in the same month: Roger Stéphane, a distinguished member of the Gide generation, whose principal joys were young men and Beethoven piano sonatas, blew his brains out in his elegant apartment in the 16ème; Gérard Voitet, bookseller, publisher, and friend of both Debord and Stéphane, shot himself two days later. Although Stéphane was linked to Debord and Voitet through friendship and business, and thus implicated by the French press in murky situationist secrets, the reason he gave for shooting himself was his boredom with the Mitterrand generation. Given his classical approach to life and art, and the mood of anomie and fatigue which prevails in French cultural and political arenas, we really have no reason to disbelieve him. Stéphane was known to be particularly distressed over Mitterrand's *Grand Projet* to build ugly modernist monuments to himself all over Paris. Stéphane's death may be one of the few suicides in history inspired by bad architecture.

Sarah Kofman, an austere Nietzschean philosopher and co-editor, with Jacques Derrida, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and Jean-Luc Nancy, of the Galilée series of philosophical essays, killed herself a month before the Debord-Stéphane-Voitet axis, declaring that it was time to bring her work to an end. It is because of this declaration that her death has been seen by the French academic community as the perfect postmodern suicide. Similarly, upon hearing of Debord's suicide, Philippe Sollers declared that Debord was a "great revolutionary poet" who, in the tradition of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and Artaud, was a "suicide of society." All of these suicides have made it seem to the post-Althusserian generation of postmodernists that *not* to seek death by one's own hand would be disgraceful, implying some kind of academic fraud.

[Essay]

SECULARISM'S BLIND FAITH

Adapted from Freedom and Its Discontents: Reflections on Four Decades of American Moral Experience, *by Peter Marin, published by Steerforth Press, in South Royalton, Vermont. Marin's essay "The Fury of Eros" appeared in the February 1994 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

The great dream at the heart of modern American secularism has always been that religion would slowly wither away, giving way, as it did so, to reason, to a morality rooted not in a fear of God or the hope of heaven but in reflection, a sense of kinship, and a belief in the common good. Values once maintained through oppression or fear would rise naturally from human reason, instinct, and sympathy. The religious divisions and hatred separating us from one another would disappear, and the senses of gratitude and awe traditionally felt for God would be transferred to the human world and provide a foundation for a universalized community. As we know, none of this came to be, or is likely to come to be. The struggle to live ethically without God has left us not with the just and moral order we imagined but with disorder and confusion.

Something has gone radically wrong with secularism. The problem has more than its share of irony, for secularism, in the end, has converted itself into a kind of religion. Our hallowed tradition of skepticism and tolerance has grown into its near opposite, and it now partakes of precisely the same arrogance, the same irrationality and passion for certainty, the same pretense to unquestioned virtue against which its powers were once arrayed. In the desperate way we cling to belief, in our contempt for those who do not believe what we believe, secularism has, indeed, taken on the trappings of a faith—and a narrow one at that.

All of this, I suppose, should come as no surprise. Certain ideas fundamental to much of modern secularism—especially those associated with progress, improvement, "uplift," or rehabilitation—have their most obvious and deepest roots in religious ways of seeing the world. Analyze the positions of secular, liberal, or left-wing Americans on any of our contemporary national debates and you can find, clearly preserved, many of the assumptions and attitudes held by the Puritans toward community, deviance, sinners, and rectitude.

Remember, in this context, what we saw at the last Democratic Convention, and then at the Inauguration: Bill Clinton surrounded by secular academics and experts of all kinds, ready to right society's various wrongs with an endless series of schemes and interventions, an extended twelve-step program for the nation with the role of "higher power" played by the state. Our secular claims to moral authority, our postures of superiority and virtue, our belief in the use of a "moral" government to correct errant behavior—all of this is the secular form of what in the nineteenth century was brought to frontier towns by the preachers and the other members of the "civilizing classes." Now the transition is complete: the state has become the church, and it's all happened in the name of ends so virtuous, so pure, so astonishingly assured, they might have been handed down by God.

The attitudes I am describing—a passion for totalizing thought, a conviction that we know better than others what is good for them—cut across almost the entire range of contemporary secularism. They're present, obviously, in the Marxist notions of the new man, in the speech and behavior codes now enacted on campuses, and in the fury with which abortion-rights defenders denounce as charlatans or knaves all those who persist in thinking of the fetus as a person and alive. All of the positions I've named may indeed be defensible on one ground or another, but what's important is *how* they're held: with a monstrous certainty that assumes first the tone of self-righteousness and then the form of coercion or tyranny.

I remember that a few years ago someone discovered, behind an abandoned California abortion mill, hundreds of discarded fetuses in Dumpsters. As best I can recall, a Christian group approached state officials and asked to say some kind of prayer when the fetuses were buried. But this proved too much for certain secularists. They went to court and argued against the rights of the Christians to say their prayer and petitioned the judge to declare the fetuses "waste human tissue."

Waste human tissue! This is what we've come to as secularists. This is what we fight for in court. I honestly doubt that souls exist and rise, and I've never believed there exists a God who listens to our prayers. But so what? I can understand the human horror or grief one might feel at the desecration in a Dumpster of life-to-be or what-might-have-been-life. Is a reverence for that life-to-be, or sorrow at its degradation, so out of the question that we must forbid its expression in prayer? Here, juxtaposed with one another, we have the illu-



From a series of photographs of "priests and priestesses of Vodou," taken in Haiti by Phyllis Galembo, a New York City photographer. According to Galembo, Haitian Vodou, or voodoo, "incorporate[s] influences of the French colonialists of the 16th century, the Roman Catholic church," and "the African Diaspora." The priests and priestess above were photographed in the shrines they use for their religious practices. Galembo's work will be on display this fall at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History in Los Angeles.

sions of religion and the "mature realism" of secularism. And which one seems more frightening, more dangerous, closer to death than life: the religious notion that the soul of a fetus floats up to God, or the secular notion that nothing more is involved here than a discarded appendix?

Pick up, if you will, almost any copy of *The Nation*, or *Mother Jones*, or *The Village Voice*. In those dissident publications you'd hope to find, in one form or another, some kind of alternative wisdom to hold over and against the conservative or religious points of view now on the rise. But that is not what's there. Though I sometimes write for these magazines, I now find it increasingly difficult to read them. There's an implicit sense of superiority in almost every word, a denunciatory tone attached to all disagreement, a furious self-righteousness that accompanies all criticism, turning it into a battle between the saved and the sinner. Everything is put forth as if fundamental matters had been settled, as if truth had been revealed, as if our own particular points of view—socialism, say, or feminism—are somehow coeval with reason itself, have emerged from history as absolute truths magically vouchsafed to us from the future.

I do not mean to demean here the extraordinary ideas or glorious ideals which still lie, half-forgotten and largely unexpressed, at the heart of secular belief. The role secularism has played in the last couple of hundred years has usually been an honorable one, powered by deep and transformative passions and hopes. But along the way we've bred out of secularism the deep seriousness and the hu-

military that once informed it, and also the senses of tragedy, complexity, and ambiguity which, at its best, marked it as a legitimate response to the mindlessness of others. And we've somehow picked up the baggage of those mindless others: a readiness to force upon people through law what reason cannot teach them, and a sense of superiority or virtue that makes us contemptuous of others. Whether it is the state of education or children born out of wedlock or divorce rates or moral confusion in our communities, we steer forever away from the possibility that something in our system of beliefs may be in some small way to blame.

The astonishing thing about all this is that such certainty, such freedom from self-doubt, should persist at the heart of secularism even after the past century, after countless examples of the ways in which predominantly secular ideologies—I am thinking here of Marxism, Stalinism, the Maoists in China—have failed to produce the results that were anticipated or promised. What we should have learned has something to do with fallibility, with humility, with the endless human capacity for error. It ought to have sent us rushing back to examine the fundamental assumptions we've made about the world, the pretty castles and palaces we've etched in the air. We know now, or ought to know, that men are as ready to kill in God's absence as they are in his name: that reason, like faith, can lead to murder, that the fanaticism long associated with religion was not born there, but has its roots deeper down in human nature.



From Factsheet Five.

[Story]

AN AMERICAN DREAM

From "Violence in America," by Lewis Nordan, in the June issue of The Algonkian, *a promotional periodical published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Nordan teaches creative writing at the University of Pittsburgh; his novel* The Sharpshooter Blues *will be published this month by Algonquin.*

My wife got a letter around the first of the year saying that she had inherited some money from a dead relative. It was one of those storybook deals, a great-uncle she'd never met. We didn't believe it at first. We read the letter over and over. We called the phone number on the stationery and talked to somebody at the bank. It was true all right. We're a middle-aged couple, in our fifties, barely making ends meet, so we were thrilled. It wasn't a lot of money, but it was a year's salary for the two of us. The taxes were all paid. It was a good deal.

We made jokes. We said we could pay off our Visa card and go out for dinner and have enough left over for the parking meter. Then we imagined a new house for ourselves. We would each have our own private study. There would be many bathrooms, all with skylights. Then we imagined South Sea vacations. We would get good tans and drink rum out of pineapples. Then we became philanthropic. We would set up a scholarship fund for the education of needy children. We would give it all to the Rainbow Kitchen. Then we got practical. We would pay off the car, get the house painted, get a stove with a self-cleaning oven, put some away for retirement, buy CDs, IRAs.

We sat together in the living room and dreamed of all the things we'd ever wanted.

Then I said, "I've always wanted a gun."

My wife looked at me. "A gun?"

I said, "It's not a good idea. It could be dangerous. I realize that."

She said, "A gun."

I said, "One of those AK-47s you hear so much about."

I thought she would say, "No, really, how should we spend it?" But she said, "With a banana clip."

I looked at her.

She said, "I always wanted a derringer. Chrome-plated, with a pearl-handled grip."

I said, "You could keep it in your purse."

She shook her hair. She said, "Or my garter belt."



"A Man Killing His Enemy," a photograph taken with a Polaroid instant camera by Christian Alberto López Medina, an eleven-year-old boy who lives in Chiapas, Mexico. Medina's photograph is part of "Retratos y Sueños/Portraits and Dreams," a project by Wendy Ewald, an American artist; Ewald helped schoolchildren in Chiapas act out and photograph their dreams and fantasies. This photo appeared in the premiere issue of DoubleTake, *a quarterly published in Durham, North Carolina.*

She's still a beautiful woman. I said, "Right. Your garter belt."

She said, "Do you remember in *Pulp Fiction*, when John Travolta left his AK-47 on the kitchen sink?"

I said, "I loved that part."

She said, "That was the sexiest part to me. The weapon, the dishwashing detergent, side by side. Oh, man."

I said, "I'll need bullets. A lot of bullets."

She said, "Teflon bullets, if we can get them. They penetrate bulletproof vests."

I said, "Like on *Homicide*. But not all Teflon. We'll want conventional stuff too."

She said, "Exploding bullets. They'll be legal soon."

I said, "Right! Jeez, I almost forgot about exploding bullets."

It was mid-afternoon. We were rich. We sat on the sofa and watched O.J. for a while. We held hands. We made love on the couch. Marcia Clark was mad at F. Lee Bailey again.

My wife became thoughtful. She said, "You know what's wrong with this murder trial?"

I looked at the screen. Johnnie Cochran leaned close to O.J. They both laughed.

My wife said, "No guns."

I said I hadn't thought of it before, but she was right. A stabbing was all right, but something was missing, it was true. It's not the same without firearms.

She said, "Now the Betty Bradley trial—*that* was a murder. Guns blazing, empty shell casings, the smell of cordite in the air."

I said, "Or the woman who killed the diet doctor, remember? The schoolteacher."

She said, "Exactly."

We watched O.J. a little longer. It was pretty disappointing, so after a while we turned it off and just sat together on the couch.

Finally my wife said, "Anyway, I'm an heiress."

I said, "We're rich."

She said, "A derringer is just a start. An AK-47 is training wheels. We'll fill the house with guns."

I said, "I love you. I've never loved anyone else."

[Memoir]

IN THE COUNTRY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

From Welcome to My Country, *by Lauren Slater, to be published in February by Random House. Slater is a psychologist in Boston. Her memoir originally appeared in the Spring issue of* The Missouri Review.

Summer, ninety-five degrees. The residential unit for chronic schizophrenics sits dead and silent in the heat. I ring the bell and a fat sweating boy, his face a mash of pimples, answers. "I am here to see Dr. Siley," I say, glancing down at the job advertisement in my hand. The pimply-faced boy stares and stares at me. I can tell, from his fatness and sweat, that he is a patient. He reaches out and touches my neck. I flinch. "What's wrong?" he hisses at me, spittle foaming in the corners of his lips. "You don't like me, you don't like me, you don't like me?" He sings it more than says it, and I don't know how to answer. I want to say, "I'm sorry." I want to say, "Don't you know it's not polite to touch someone before you know them?" I want to say, "You scare me," but instead I repeat, my voice tight, "Please, I'm here to see Dr. Siley. Could you get him for me?" The boy backs away. My very first contact with a patient has gone cold. "Dr. Siley," he wails, running down the cool hall of the institution. "Dr. Siley, some new shrink is here. Watch out for her. She's an alien. She has no bones in her neck."

So begins my work with the chronic schizophrenic population. I am an alien to them and they to me. I am hired by the all-male residential unit to conduct group therapy for six of the patients once a week. I've taken courses in school on psychopathology, read *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* and *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*, but none of these things is enough to prepare me for the conundrums of working with these men. They appear to be the grotesques of this world, burdened by the most horrifying psychiatric illness known to humankind. Anyone who agrees to work with the chronic schizophrenic agrees to take on a supposedly hopeless case. This is what you are taught, what the research says.

This is what my first group indicates. There is Tran Hguyen, nicknamed Pepsi, a cocoa-colored little Vietnamese who came to this country after the war and who bows to invisible Buddhas all day in the corridors; Joseph D'Agostino, with his mangy beard and a green-and-khaki combat helmet he keeps on the pillow next to him when he sleeps; Charles Grossman, forty-two years old and dying of AIDS; Lenny Swanson, who once stood naked in Harvard Yard and recited poetry; Robert Fuller, who believes the air is full of flying fruits; and Oscar DiBenedetto, all 366 pounds of him, who claims that he receives constant blow jobs from such diverse females as the Queen of England and Chrissy, the Shih Tzu dog next door.

Oscar slogs into the group room, groans, lowers himself onto the floor, and lies there with his hairy belly bloating upward.

"I am," I say, my voice cracking from fear, "your new group therapist. We'll be meeting once a week to talk things over, see how your lives are going, confront problems, think up solutions, even play some games. How does that sound?"

Silence. Oscar, on the floor, appears to be asleep. Surprisingly delicate snores issue from his thick lips. The other men sit pressed against the walls or staring into their own squares of space as though they were strangers riding a train.

The staff in this unit, many of whom are highly experienced, have advised me to forget about doing "deep work"—work that focuses on the patients' own internal worlds or attempts to foster real relationships between them—and I have no trouble agreeing with the prescription. For one thing, my own training as a psychologist, which I am just completing, has stressed only behavior management with the schizophrenic, downplaying any other kind of psychotherapy. This may be because we know, from studies of other schizophrenics' biochemical processes and brain structures, that such patients operate so far from the folds of the golden cortex that the most they can usually master are low-level self-care skills. Treatment for the chronic schizophrenic swerves away from explorations of hallucinations and delusions, or from the fostering of relational bonds, and focuses instead on what are called Activities of Daily Living: how to budget your money, how to dress and take your medication on time, how to make a meal.

Each Friday, the six staff members meet in the small front office. "Pepsi isn't using soap when he showers," Bill, one of the counselors, says. "We need to address that issue with him."

"Oscar is eating too much pizza. Who here wants to help him count his calories?"

The meetings last only an hour but feel more like four. Time drags on as we discuss getting Joseph to the dentist because his teeth are rotting, and fail to focus on the more interesting fact that he thinks minnows swim in his stomach; as we talk about Robert and his medication schedule, and ignore his fear of flying

fruits that splatter and stain a world none of us knows how to reach.

Perhaps we do this because we are all, every one of us who works at the inpatient unit, wedded to the belief that the schizophrenic—given his rotten neuronal pathways, the drought of dopamine in his brain—cannot think about higher-level concerns, like love and beauty. It would be like trying to teach Dostoevsky to a three-year-old, logarithms to a person with Alzheimer's.

But how did this belief come to be? After all, a long time ago, in Freud's Vienna, the crazy man was seen as someone closer to creativity, Van Gogh's stars stuffed in his twilit skull. Harold Searles, earlier in the century, wrote extensively on the emotional life of schizophrenics and the importance of therapy that honored and explored these feelings and dynamics. I trace the loss of these views to the rise, in the late 1950s, of Humanistic Psychology and the work of Abraham Maslow. Maslow believed in what he called a Hierarchy of Basic Needs: before we can focus on higher-level needs, which include emotional insight, love, and connections with others, we must be free from hunger, thirst, and illness, as well as from threats that endanger either our psychological or physiological survival. In the Maslowian model, which dominates modern psychiatric treatment, the very weight of a psychotic illness, with its attendant terrors and confusions, would likely subsume striving of a higher sort.

And yet, as I begin to listen to the men in my group, as week after week goes by, I think I start to see glimmers of higher-level capabilities. Oscar's delusions have an awful lot to do with girlfriends who turn into lizards. He tells me that in the night his seven Chinese wives pay him visits, slipping in through the windows. And Joseph often babbles on and on about a wife and two kids in Brighton who the staff tell me have never existed. Do these delusions, I wonder, possibly reflect a mature desire for intimacy in such seemingly immature minds? I'm not sure. I need to push things, explore a little.

It is late August now, and I've been leading the group for two months. Sometimes, after work, when I step outside, the people hurrying to and fro on the sidewalk look like spirits to me, sad sweating ghosts from an underground world. Pieces of madness cling to me like lint, and I can't shake them off. I am tired of the bizarreness of my patients, more tired still of trying to ignore their hallucinations and instead pay attention to money and meds and keeping their shirts stain-free. When Lenny tells me in group that he is communicating in code with a woman who is also a paintbrush, I say to him, as I've been trained, "No, Lenny. We don't speak code in this group. Why don't you tell all of us what you actually mean? Why don't you stop slumping, sit up, and button your shirt?" When Joseph tells the group he shot seven soldiers in World War I, I say, "You have never been in World War I. Tell us what your plans for the weekend are, and why you have overslept three days in a row." Doing this work is like being the goalie in a soccer game; over and over again the swift kicks of craziness come at you, and over and over again you try to deflect them, or better yet, take the air right out of the ball.

But a few days later when Oscar announces to the group that a spaceship has landed on his enormous belly, I break down. "All right," I say, looking around the room, eyeing the door and hoping it's closed so that none of the oth-

[Talents]

THERE SHE IS, MISS FURNITURE DISPLAY

From a list of "nonvocal or unusual" acts performed by contestants in national beauty pageants to fulfill their talent requirement. The list appeared in 101 Secrets to Winning Beauty Pageants, *by Ann-Marie Bivans, published by Citadel Press. Bivans, a columnist for* Pageantry *magazine, cites the talents below to counter "the idea that only singers win."*

flower arranging
clogging
horsemanship
trampoline
Chinese sword dance
sketching
mime
chalkboard drawing
imitating Marilyn Monroe
marimba
conducting pageant orchestra
portraying Queen Elizabeth I in full costume
roller-skating
ventriloquism
double ventriloquism
archery
tap-dancing upside down
karate
stomping in broken glass
South Sea dance
contortionist act
hula dancing
fashion-design exhibit
Russian cossack dance
films of water ballet and high-diving
Middle Eastern belly dancing
portraying *Romeo and Juliet* in period costume
furniture display
driving a tractor

er staff can hear, "why don't we go for a ride in it then? Let's go."

"Let's go!" the irrepressible Lenny shouts, jumping up and down. He strides across the room and eases down on the floor right next to Oscar, laying his dark black hand on top of Oscar's swollen white stomach.

"Move in," I say, looking around to the rest of my group members. "Charles," I say, "move in, right up next to Oscar. You too, Pepsi," I say to the little man who week after week sits hunched and rocking in a corner, who won't move, won't speak, ever. Pepsi is the most closed off of all. He is missing three fingers and one testicle because the voice of Mother Mary told him to cut them off. "You too, Pepsi," I say a little louder.

The men all eye me, something alert in their usually slack faces; they edge forward on their seats. I edge out of my own seat and sit on the floor, so close I can see the rise and fall of Oscar's belly, the bubbles of sweat that seep from his large red pores.

"A spaceship," I repeat to Oscar. "On your belly right now. To take us into your world." The rest of the men creep forward, sit Indian style in a circle around him. As far as I know, it's the closest any of them has ever gotten to one another. "We are going into the spaceship," I say, "and we're all riding up. What do we see, Oscar? Where are we?"

Lenny still has his hand on Oscar's belly and now he is moving it back and forth, rubbing. Oscar, his voice flat and thick, begins to speak.

"Sheba," he says. "We are going to see Sheba. She lives up there, my girl does, in the sky. She is a star. She eats leg of lamb without the skin. And octopus."

"Octopus," Joseph says. "Freaky."

"Sheba is your girl," I say.

"I have hundreds of girls," Oscar replies, "all over the sky. They are lizards and albinos. They keep me company. They love me."

"They love you," I say, and as I think of the overweight unloved-by-girls Oscar, something sad rises up in me.

"They love him," Joseph says, and there is something keening in his voice. "I myself am waiting for my wife in Brighton. She keeps me good company. Sometimes she sits on my head."

"And the albino lady," Oscar says. His eyes are closed and our spaceship swims and spins. "She has quite a cunt."

"Falling out, falling out," Charles murmurs. He rocks back and forth and his silver hair glows like some sort of outer-space strobe. And we rise and spin, and at the same time I think we are closer to the ground than we've ever been.

"Landing," Lenny says, and he takes his hand and slaps the floor—*splat*. We all jump, startled. The dream is broken. The albinos lope away.

One by one the men shuffle back to their usual seats, each distanced from the other again. They start their usual rocking and tapping, separated again in their own spheres.

The more I think about it, the clearer it becomes to me that these men's pivotal concerns are with connection—how to get it, how to hold it, how to mourn its loss. Crazy or sane, we all know the desire for skin touching skin or brain rubbing brain. Although their desires are often expressed in lusty ways, I don't believe they are motivated by something as simple as lust. The sensitivity to language and frustration

[Recollection]

A WRITER'S GIFT

From an interview with Eudora Welty in the Spring issue of The Paris Review. *The interview was conducted last fall by George Plimpton at Welty's home in Jackson, Mississippi.*

GEORGE PLIMPTON: Do writers ever come down here to see you?

EUDORA WELTY: Yes. Henry Miller came one time. We had him for three days. My mother said he'd never enter my house. I got two or three boyfriends to help me with him and drive the car and protect me from God only knew what my mother thought.

PLIMPTON: Did you like Mr. Miller?

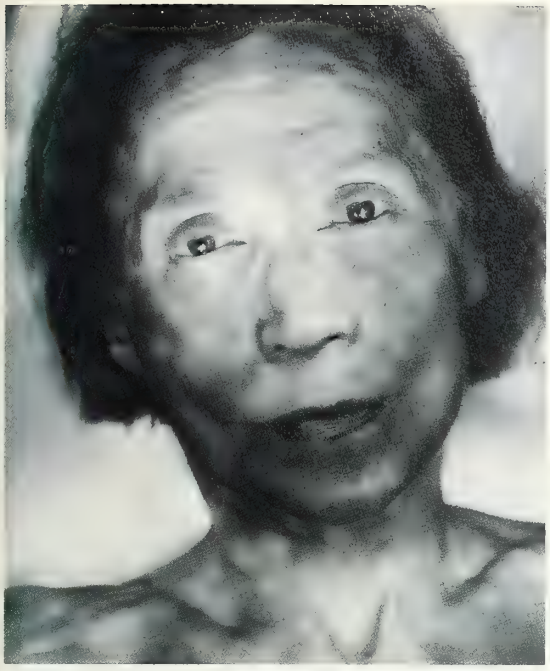
WELTY: Not much. He was so dull. He never looked at anything. I guess he was bored by being in Mississippi. During his visit they were going to move the hospital for the insane down on North State Street to the next county, to a bigger place. The patients were helping move themselves. I thought that would be a funny sight for Mr. Miller, especially since the superintendent was named Love. Superintendent Love, moving the insane hospital patients from Jackson to across the river. It meant absolutely nothing to him.

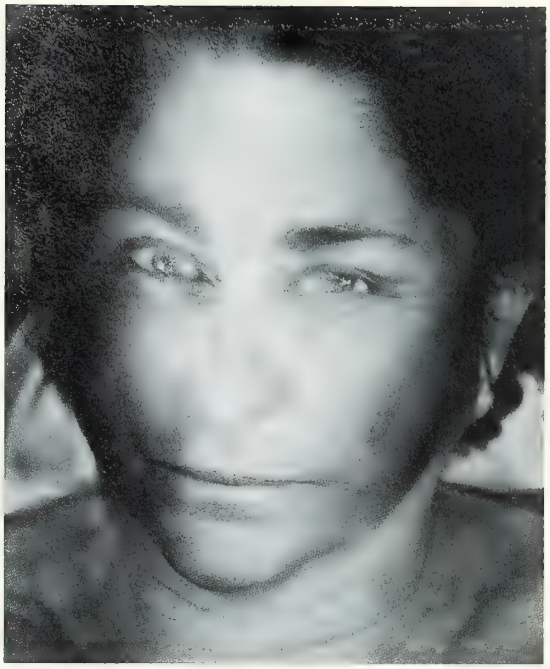
PLIMPTON: That's hard to believe.

WELTY: I thought so, too. It's not every day there's something like that in Jackson to offer anyone. These poor old crazy people carrying their own beds out and putting them in a truck and driving away. Don't you like that?

PLIMPTON: It's wonderful. Did you ever write about that yourself?

WELTY: No. But I thought it was a gift that I could offer as a hostess.





"Hellen" and "Mirriam," portraits by Gary Schneider, a New York City artist. Schneider creates his portraits using exposures of up to thirty minutes, a process, he says, that captures a "compilation of emotional states." Schneider's portraits are currently on display at the National Gallery of Canada, in Ottawa.

over its loss, the simple touches and aches in their faces—these things lead me to believe their stretches for connections are occurring at more complex levels, are rooted in the need to belong, to participate in the wider world. At the same time, though, I can't help but wonder if I'm not imposing those concerns on them, trying to grid my more advanced meaning system onto the mush of their minds.

In November, Charles begins to die. He grows so thin that the tracery of bones becomes visible and his eyes sink into crepuscular hollows. Sores sputter open on his skin, weep a watery red liquid he won't wash away.

Bill, another staff member, finds Charles crumpled on the stairs a few days later, and an ambulance comes to take him away. The men won't watch. They scatter into the dayroom or their own bedrooms, stubbornly stare into the air and trace invisible figures. "Say good-bye to Charles," Bill says as the stretcher is wheeled out. "Who'll take care of him?" Oscar asks, and then turns away and starts to rock and tap. Too painful, this is.

A few days after Charles has been removed to a hospice, Sophie finds Robert standing in the entrance to Charles's old room, screaming. Then the sound stops. All sound stops and an eerie silence settles over the ward. When I bring pastels and drawing paper into group, the men won't touch them. When I suggest pizza, they grunt and rock and talk about Sheba. I can't reach the men anymore, nor they me. "Wind, wind in my head," Robert moans, "the world disappearing, eaten up by photons."

All I can really do is watch, helplessly, as the men drool and slip from me, from one another, back into their separate spheres.

One day, a week before Charles finally dies, I bring a rubber ball into group. "Okay," I say. "Everyone up. Stand in a circle. Whoever has the ball," I explain, "cannot toss it to someone else unless he asks a question of that person first. In this way, we will reestablish our friendships and continue to get to know one another better and better."

The men stare at me blankly. I throw the ball to Joseph. "Joseph," I say, "what are you most afraid of?"

Joseph catches the ball. "Chips," he says. "Chips the CIA has planted in my brain." He throws the ball to Oscar. "Oscar—" he says, "are you?—" but then he splutters into panicked giggles and can't finish the question. Oscar doesn't even bother catching the ball. It bounces off his blubbery chest and dribbles into the center of the circle.

"Okay!" I say, all fake enthusiasm. "Let's start again!"

I pick the ball back up, feeling ridiculous. "Robert," I say, tossing it again. "Who do you most love?" Robert catches the ball, cradles it, and won't let go. "Robert, throw the ball," I say. "Go on." He throws the ball then, but backwards, over his head, so that it swerves outside the circle, and we're all left looking at one another, looking at nothing.

I sigh. "It's hard for everyone," I say at last. "Maybe you are all too upset about Charles."

"Nuh uh," says Oscar. He slinks back into his customary slump on the floor. "We're not upset about Charles. We're all like Charles. None of us can die, because we're already dead."

And then each member of the circle, as though on cue, lies on the floor. Only Pepsi is left standing.

Pepsi's eyes tick around the room; tick back and forth over the fallen bodies. His little broom of a mustache quivers. "No," he says. It is maybe the first word he has ever said in group. "No!" he says again. "Not true! Not true!" His English is laden with a heavy Vietnamese accent. "No no no," he chants. "I come here all the way from Vietnam. I have family. Family!"

"Who's in your family?" I ask, thinking of the chart I read on Pepsi, which reported that his father and three sisters were bombed to death in his village during the war.

"Here!" he says, his eyes still swinging around the room, lighting on me and then on the other slumped men. "Here here. In America! My family is in this place, this room. Now!" he shouts. "Here!"

And then Pepsi bursts forth. He unzips his fly and with his hips shrugs off his pants. The pants fall to the floor, showing us, beneath, the single wrinkled testicle hanging like a chestnut on a winter tree. Pepsi cups his penis in his hand.

"Oh man," Lenny says, rolling around on the floor. "That is definitely not a cunt."

"No," I say, my own head spinning with shock. (What do I make of this? Should I stop it? How?) All the men are sitting up now, shaking off the snow of a long sleep. "No, it's not a cunt," I say. "It's Pepsi."

"I have many wounds," Pepsi says. "I do them to myself," he says, and pauses, sadness in his voice. "I do them to myself because I must."

Then Pepsi walks up to Robert and points to a raised welt on his own thigh. It's shaped like a crescent, a pale pink. "Touch it," he says.

Robert reaches up to touch it. His finger lingers on the crescent. Pepsi's penis shivers and swells. "Yes," Pepsi says, backing away. "Yes."

"Touch it," he says, toddling up to Lenny, pointing to what looks like a self-inflicted burn on his knee. Lenny lifts a long elegant black finger and then, like a pianist pressing a key, lands lightly on the wound.

A heavy hush fills the room now. Outside, the winter sky is darkening, and a thin blade of moon slices up into the sky. As we touch Pepsi's wounds—the red gashes, the fire in the flesh—the group comes alive again, resurrects itself. And the little man, half naked, begins to dance. The rest of the men come together, draw in. They hum and clap in time to a rhythm, and we are all part of it, some sacred strip dance of death and life and the links between bodies—my fingers, your toes, my cut.

Pepsi looks like he is going to cry now as he

[Poem]

TITLE SEARCH

By John Ashbery. From And the Stars Were Shining, *a collection of Ashbery's poems published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

Voices of Spring. Vienna Bonbons.
Morning Papers. Visiting Firemen. Mourning Polka.
Symphonie en ut dièse majeur. Fog-soaked Extremities.
Agrippa. Agrippine. Nelly and All. The Day the Coast Came to Our House.

Hocus Focus. Unnatural Dreams. The Book of Five-Dollar Poems.
Oaks and Craters. Robert, a Rhapsody. Cecilia Valdés.
The Jewish Child. Mandarin Sorcerers. The Reader's Digest
Book of Posh Assignations. The Penguin Book of Thwarted Lovers.
The American Screwball Comedy.

Scenes of Clerical Life. Incan Overtures. The House on 42nd Street.
The Man in Between. The Man on the Box. The Motor Car.

Rue des Acacias. Elm Street and After.
The Little Red Church. The Hotel District.
I'll Eat a Mexican. The Heritage of Froth.
The Trojan Comedy. Water to the Fountain. Memoirs of a Hermit Crab.

The Ostrich Succession. Exit pursued by a Turkey.
In the Pound. The Artist's Life. On the Beautiful Blue Danube.
Less is Roar. The Bicyclist. The Father.



"Giu in Fondo" ("Deep Down"), by Wainer Vaccari. Vaccari's paintings were exhibited last spring at the Museum Voor Moderne Kunst Ostend, in Ostend, Belgium. Vaccari lives in Modena, Italy.

scurries about the room, rolling his shirt sleeves back down, pulling his pants back on. Then he does cry, standing in the center of the room. He puts his hand over his heart and starts to sing in Vietnamese. His voice and the ballad have a mournful, ancient feel to them; each word has some weeping inside.

"Pepsi, that was beautiful," I say. "What does the song mean?"

"I love a lady who doesn't love me; I am lost, oh so lost," Pepsi says.

"You are so lonely, aren't you, Pepsi?" I say.

"Yes, and I am so sad because Oscar won't shake my hand."

Oscar, leaning back against the wall, hands folded on the bubble of his belly, opens one eye as slowly as a lizard in the sun. "Huh?" he says.

"You won't shake my hand," Pepsi repeats, agitated now.

"Don't always feel like it, Peps," Oscar says. "Sometimes I'm just too tired."

"But you want Oscar to shake your hand, Pepsi," I say.

"Everyone to shake my hand," Pepsi says.

"Can we shake Pepsi's hand?" I ask the group.

"Yeah," says Lenny. "And then we go to a whorehouse."

"Okay," I say to Pepsi. "Go on. We want to shake your hand."

Pepsi skips around the room, nimble, hopeful. He cavorts and bows. He shakes each man's hand with pride. "Welcome to my country," he says to each person as he clasps us in a handshake. "Welcome to my country."

"Welcome," each one of us says back.

What country, I wonder, does he mean? For surely there is something a little crazy about all of this, but also so very appropriate. I think of an empty skull Oscar once drew and how we are, in this group, trying to learn to go through bone and enter that private socket where our separate brains sit. And I think, Dr. Maslow, no matter how sick we are, how strained we are, we never stop wanting such closeness. We never lose the language altogether. Sheba is in the sky. She stretches out her red robes and takes a sad boy in. A spaceship swims out of the dark and Pepsi leads us in. Welcome to my country. ■



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PUT ON A HAPPY FACE

Masking the differences between blacks and whites

By Benjamin DeMott

At the movies these days, questions about racial injustice have been amicably resolved. Watch *Pulp Fiction* or *Congo* or *A Little Princess* or any other recent film in which both blacks and whites are primary characters and you can, if you want, forget about race. Whites and blacks greet one another on the screen with loving candor, revealing their common humanity. In *Pulp Fiction,* an armed black mobster (played by Samuel L. Jackson) looks deep into the eyes of an armed white thief in the middle of a holdup (played by Tim Roth) and shares his version of God's word in Ezekiel, whereupon the two men lay aside their weapons, both more or less redeemed. The moment inverts an earlier scene in which a white boxer (played by Bruce Willis) risks his life to save another black mobster (played by Ving Rhames), who is being sexually tortured as a prelude to his execution.

Pulp Fiction (gross through July: $107 million) is one of a series of films suggesting that the beast of American racism is tamed and harmless. Close to the start of *Die Hard with a Vengeance* (gross through July: $95 million) the camera finds a white man wearing sandwich boards on the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 138th Street in Harlem. The boards carry a horrific legend: I HATE NIGGERS. A group of young blacks approach the man with murderous intent, bearing guns and knives. They are figures straight out of a national nightmare—ugly, enraged, terrifying. No problem. A black man, again played by Jackson, appears and rescues the white man, played by Willis. The black man and white man come to know each other well. In time the white man declares flatly to the black, "I need you more

Benjamin DeMott's new books are The Trouble with Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race *(Grove/Atlantic), which will be published in January, and* Created Equal: Reading and Writing About Class in America, *out this month from HarperCollins. His most recent article in* Harper's Magazine *was "Morality Plays," which appeared in the December 1994 issue.*



than you need me." A moment later he charges the black with being a racist—with not liking whites as much as the white man likes blacks—and the two talk frankly about their racial prejudices. Near the end of the film, the men have grown so close that each volunteers to die for the other.

Pulp Fiction and *Die Hard with a Vengeance* follow the pattern of *Lethal Weapon 1*, *2*, and *3*, the Danny Glover/Mel Gibson buddy vehicles that collectively grossed $357 million, and *White Men Can't Jump*, which, in the year of the L.A. riots, grossed $76 million. In *White Men Can't Jump*, a white dropout, played by Woody Harrelson, ekes out a living on black-dominated basketball courts in Los Angeles. He's arrogant and aggressive but never in danger because he has a black protector and friend, played by Wesley Snipes. At the movie's end, the white, flying above the hoop like a stereotypical black player, scores the winning basket in a two-on-two pickup game on an alley-oop pass from his black chum, whereupon the two men fall into each other's arms in joy. Later, the black friend agrees to find work for the white at the store he manages.

White (helpless): I gotta get a job. Can you get me a job?
Black (affectionately teasing): Got any references?
White (shy grin): You.

Such dialogue is the stuff of romance. What's dreamed of and gained is a place where whites are unafraid of blacks, where blacks ask for and need nothing from whites, and where the sameness of the races creates a common fund of sweet content.* The details of the dream matter less than the force that makes it come true for both races, eliminating the constraints of objective reality and redistributing resources, status, and capabilities. That cleansing social force supersedes political and economic fact or policy; that force, improbably enough, is friendship.

Watching the beaming white men who know how to jump, we do well to remind ourselves of what the camera shot leaves out. Black infants die in America at twice the rate of white infants. (Despite the increased

* *I could go on with examples of movies that deliver the good news of friendship:* Regarding Henry, Driving Miss Daisy, Forrest Gump, The Shawshank Redemption, Philadelphia, The Last Boy Scout, 48 Hours I–II, Rising Sun, Iron Eagle I–II, Rudy, Sister Act, Hearts of Dixie, Betrayed, The Power of One, White Nights, Clara's Heart, Doc Hollywood, Cool Runnings, Places in the Heart, Trading Places, Fried Green Tomatoes, Q & A, Platoon, A Mother's Courage: The Mary Thomas Story, The Unforgiven, The Air Up There, The Pelican Brief, Losing Isaiah, Smoke, Searching for Bobby Fischer, An Officer and a Gentleman, Speed, *etc.*

Illustration by Edmund Gi

numbers of middle-class blacks, the rates are diverging, with black rates actually rising.) One out of every two black children lives below the poverty line (as compared with one out of seven white children). Nearly four times as many black families exist below the poverty line as white families. More than 50 percent of African American families have incomes below $25,000. Among black youths under age twenty, death by murder occurs nearly ten times as often as among whites. Over 60 percent of births to black mothers occur out of wedlock, more than four times the rate for white mothers. The net worth of the typical white household is ten times that of the typical black household. In many states, five to ten times as many blacks as whites age eighteen to thirty are in prison.

The good news at the movies obscures the bad news in the streets and confirms the Supreme Court's recent decisions on busing, affirmative action, and redistricting. Like the plot of *White Men Can't Jump*, the Court postulates the existence of a society no longer troubled by racism. Because black-white friendship is now understood to be the rule, there is no need for integrated schools or a congressional Black Caucus or affirmative action. The Congress and state governors can guiltlessly cut welfare, food assistance, fuel assistance, Head Start, housing money, fellowship money, vaccine money. Justice Anthony Kennedy can declare, speaking for the Supreme Court majority last June, that creating a world of genuine equality and sameness requires only that "our political system and our society cleanse themselves . . . of discrimination."

The deep logic runs as follows: *Yesterday white people didn't like black people, and accordingly suffered guilt, knowing that the dislike was racist and knowing also that as moral persons they would have to atone for the guilt. They would have to ante up for welfare and Head Start and halfway houses and free vaccine and midnight basketball and summer jobs for schoolkids and graduate fellowships for promising scholars and craft-union apprenticeships and so on, endlessly. A considerable and wasteful expense. But at length came the realization that by ending dislike or hatred it would be possible to end guilt, which in turn would mean an end to redress: no more wasteful ransom money. There would be but one requirement: the regular production and continuous showing forth of evidence indisputably proving that hatred has totally vanished from the land.*

I cannot tell the reader how much I would like to believe in this sunshine world. After the theater lights brighten and I've found coins for a black beggar on the way to my car and am driving home through downtown Springfield, Massachusetts, the world invented by *Die Hard with a Vengeance* and America's highest court gives way only slowly to the familiar urban vision in my windshield—homeless blacks on trash-strewn streets, black prostitutes staked out on a corner, and signs of a not very furtive drug trade. I know perfectly well that most African Americans don't commit crimes or live in alleys. I also know that for somebody like myself, downtown Springfield in the late evening is not a good place to be.

The movies reflect the larger dynamic of wish and dream. Day after day the nation's corporate ministries of culture churn out images of racial harmony. Millions awaken each morning to the friendly sight of Katie Couric nudging a perky elbow into good buddy Bryant Gumbel's side. My mailbox and millions of demographically similar others are choked with flyers from companies (Wal-Mart, Victoria's Secret) bent on publicizing both their wares and their social bona fides by displaying black and white models at cordial ease with one another. A torrent of goodwill messages about race arrives daily—revelations of corporate largesse, commercials, news features, TV specials, all proclaiming that whites like me feel strongly positive impulses of friendship for blacks and that those same admirable impulses are effectively eradicating racial differences, rendering blacks and whites the same. BellSouth TV commercials present children singing "I am the keeper of the world"—first a

DAY AFTER DAY THE NATION'S CORPORATE MINISTRIES OF CULTURE CHURN OUT IMAGES OF RACIAL HARMONY

THESE MESSAGES AND IMAGES ALLOW THE COMFORTABLE WHITE MAJORITY TO TELL ITSELF A FATUOUS UNTRUTH

white child, then a black child, then a white child, then a black child. Because Dow Chemical likes black America, it recruits young black college grads for its research division and dramatizes, in TV commercials, their tearful-joyful partings from home. ("Son, show 'em what you got," says a black lad's father.) American Express shows an elegant black couple and an elegant white couple sitting together in a theater, happy in one another's company. (The couples share the box with an oversized Gold Card.) During the evening news I watch a black mom offer Robitussin to a miserably coughing white mom. Here's *People* magazine promoting itself under a photo of John Lee Hooker, the black bluesman. "We're these kinds of people, too," *People* claims in the caption. In the current production of *Hamlet* on Broadway, Horatio is played by a black actor. On *The 700 Club*, Pat Robertson joshes Ben Kinchlow, his black sidekick, about Ben's far-out ties.

What counts here is not the saccharine clumsiness of the interchanges but the bulk of them—the ceaseless, self-validating gestures of friendship, the humming, buzzing background theme: *All decent Americans extend the hand of friendship to African Americans; nothing but nothing is more auspicious for the African American future than this extended hand.* Faith in the miracle cure of racism by change-of-heart turns out to be so familiar as to have become unnoticeable. And yes, the faith has its benign aspect. Even as they nudge me and others toward belief in magic (instant pals and no-money-down equality), the images and messages of devoted relationships between blacks and whites do exert a humanizing influence.

Nonetheless, through these same images and messages the comfortable majority tells itself a fatuous untruth. Promoting the fantasy of painless answers, inspiring groundless self-approval among whites, joining the Supreme Court in treating "cleansing" as *inevitable*, the new orthodoxy of friendship incites culture-wide evasion, justifies one political step backward after another, and greases the skids along which, tomorrow, welfare block grants will slide into state highway-resurfacing budgets. Whites are part of the solution, says this orthodoxy, if we break out of the prison of our skin color, say hello, as equals, one-on-one, to a black stranger, and make a black friend. We're part of the problem if we have an aversion to black people or are frightened of them, or if we feel that the more distance we put between them and us the better, or if we're in the habit of asserting our superiority rather than acknowledging our common humanity. Thus we shift the problem away from politics—from black experience and the history of slavery—and perceive it as a matter of the suspicion and fear found within the white heart; solving the problem asks no more of us than that we work on ourselves, scrubbing off the dirt of ill will.

The approach miniaturizes, personalizes, and moralizes; it removes the large and complex dilemmas of race from the public sphere. It tempts audiences to see history as irrelevant and to regard feelings as decisive—to believe that the fate of black Americans is shaped mainly by events occurring in the hearts and minds of the privileged. And let's be frank: the orthodoxy of friendship feels *nice*. It practically *consecrates* self-flattery. The "good" Bill Clinton who attends black churches and talks with likable ease to fellow worshipers was campaigning when Los Angeles rioted in '92. "White Americans," he said, "are gripped by the isolation of their own experience. Too many still simply have no friends of other races and do not know any differently." Few black youths of working age in South-Central L.A. had been near enough to the idea of a job even to think of looking for work before the Rodney King verdict, but the problem, according to Clinton, was that whites need black friends.

Most of the country's leading voices of journalistic conscience (editorial writers, television anchorpersons, syndicated columnists) roundly endorse the doctrine of black-white friendship as a means of redressing the inequalities between the races. Roger Rosenblatt, editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* and an especially deft supplier of warm and fuzzy senti-

nent, published an essay in *Family Circle* arguing that white friendship ınd sympathy for blacks simultaneously make power differentials vanish ınd create interracial identity between us, one by one. The author finds ıis *exemplum* in an episode revealing the personal sensitivity, to injured ɔlacks, of one of his children.

"When our oldest child, Carl, was in high school," he writes, "he and wo black friends were standing on a street corner in New York City one ;pring evening, trying to hail a taxi. The three boys were dressed decently ınd were doing nothing wild or threatening. Still, no taxi would pick :hem up. If a driver spotted Carl first, he might slow down, but he would ake off again when he saw the others. Carl's two companions were famil- ar with this sort of abuse. Carl, who had never observed it firsthand be- ore, burned with anger and embarrassment that he was the color of a world that would so mistreat his friends."

Rosenblatt notes that when his son "was applying to colleges, he wrote ıis essay on that taxi incident with his two black friends. . . . He was able o articulate what he could not say at the time—how ashamed and impo- ent he felt. He also wrote of the power of their friendship, which has asted to this day and has carried all three young men into the country hat belongs to them. To all of us."

In this homily white sympathy begets interracial sameness in several ways. The three classmates are said to react identically to the cabdrivers' snub; i.e., they feel humiliated. "[Carl] could not find the words to express ıis humiliation and his friends *would* not express theirs."

The anger that inspires the younger Rosenblatt's college-admission essay on racism is seen as identical with black anger. Friendship brings the class- mates together as joint, equal owners of the land of their birth ("the coun- ry that belongs to [all of] them"). And Rosenblatt supplies a still larger vi- sion of essential black-white sameness near the end of his essay: "Our proper hearts tell the truth," he declares, "which is that we are all in the same boat, rich and poor, black and white. We are helpless, wicked, heroic, ;errified, and we need one another. We need to give rides to one another."

Thus do acts of private piety substitute for public policy while the possibility of urgent political action disappears into a sentimental haze. "If we're looking for a formula to ease the tensions between the races," Rosenblatt observes, then we should "attack the disintegration of the ɔlack community" and "the desperation of the poor." Without overtly mocking civil rights activists who look toward the political arena "to ;rase the tensions," Rosenblatt alludes to them in a throwaway man- ıer, implying that properly adjusted whites look elsewhere, that there was a time for politicking for "equal rights" but we've passed through it. Now is a time in which we should listen to our hearts at mo- ments of epiphany and allow sympathy to work its wizardry, cleans- ng and floating us, blacks and whites "all in the same boat," on a mystical undercurrent of the New Age.

Blacks themselves aren't necessarily proof against this theme, as wit- ness a recent essay by James Alan McPherson in the Harvard journal *Re- construction*. McPherson, who received the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for his collection of stories *Elbow Room*, says that "the only possible steps, the safest steps . . . small ones" in the movement "toward a universal cul- ture" will be those built not on "ideologies and formulas and programs" ɔut on experiences of personal connectedness.

"Just this past spring," he writes, "when I was leaving a restaurant after taking a [white] former student to dinner, a black [woman on the sidewalk] said to my friend, in a rasping voice, 'Hello, girlfriend. Have you got any- thing to spare?'" The person speaking was a female crack addict with a child who was also addicted. "But," writes McPher- son, when the addict made her pitch to his dinner com- ɔanion, "I saw in my friend's face an understanding and sympathy and a shining which transcended race and class.

ACTS OF PRIVATE PIETY SUBSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY WHILE THE POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL ACTION DISAPPEARS INTO A SENTIMENTAL HAZE



WE DIMINISH HISTORICAL CATASTROPHES AFFECTING MILLIONS OVER CENTURIES AND INFLATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BRIEF RACIAL TENDERNESSES

Her face reflected one human soul's connection with another. The magnetic field between the two women was charged with spiritual energy."

The writer points the path to progress through interpersonal gestures by people who "insist on remaining human, and having human responses. . . . Perhaps the best that can be done, now, is the offering of understanding and support to the few out of many who are capable of such gestures, rather than devising another plan to engineer the many into one."

The elevated vocabulary ("soul," "spiritual") beatifies the impulse to turn away from the real-life agenda of actions capable of reducing racial injustice. Wherever that impulse dominates, the rhetoric of racial sameness thrives, diminishing historical catastrophes affecting millions over centuries and inflating the significance of tremors of tenderness briefly troubling the heart or conscience of a single individual—the boy waiting for a cab, the woman leaving the restaurant. People forget the theoretically unforgettable—the caste history of American blacks, the connection between no schools for longer than a century and bad school performance now, between hateful social attitudes and zero employment opportunities, between minority anguish and majority fear.

How could this way of seeing have become conventional so swiftly? How did the dogmas of instant equality insinuate themselves so effortlessly into courts and mass audiences alike? How can a white man like myself, who taught Southern blacks in the 1960s, find himself seduced—as I have been more than once—by the orthodoxy of friendship? In the civil rights era, the experience for many millions of Americans was one of discovery. A hitherto unimagined continent of human reality and history came into view, inducing genuine concern and at least a temporary setting aside of self-importance. I remember with utter clarity what I felt at Mary Holmes College in West Point, Mississippi, when a black student of mine was killed by tailgating rednecks; my fellow tutors and I were overwhelmed with how shamefully wrong a wrong could be. For a time, we were released from the prisons of moral weakness and ambiguity. In the year or two that followed—the mid-Sixties—the notion that some humans are more human than others, whites more human than blacks, appeared to have been overturned. The next step seemed obvious: society would have to admit that when one race deprives another of its humanity for centuries, those who have done the depriving are obligated to do what they can to restore the humanity of the deprived. The obligation clearly entailed the mounting of comprehensive *long-term* programs of developmental assistance—not guilt-money handouts—for nearly the entire black population. The path forward was unavoidable.



It was avoided. Shortly after the award of civil rights and the institution, in 1966, of limited preferential treatment to remedy employment and educational discrimination against African Americans, a measure of economic progress for blacks did appear in census reports. Not much, but enough to stimulate glowing tales of universal black advance and to launch the good-news barrage that continues to this day (headline in the *New York Times*, June 18, 1995: "Moving On Up: The Greening of America's Black Middle Class").

After Ronald Reagan was elected to his first term, the new dogma of black-white sameness found ideological support in the form of criticism of so-called coddling. Liberal activists of both races were berated by critics of both races for fostering an allegedly enfeebling psychology of dependency that discouraged African Americans from committing themselves to individual self-development. In 1988, the charge was passionately voiced in an essay in these pages, "I'm Black, You're White, Who's Innocent?" by Shelby Steele, who

ıttributed the difference between black rates of advance and those of oth-
:r minority groups to white folks' pampering. Most blacks, Steele
:laimed, could make it on their own—as voluntary immigrants have
lone—were they not held back by devitalizing programs that presented
hem, to themselves and others, as somehow dissimilar to and weaker
han other Americans. This argument was all-in-the-same-boatism in a
lifferent key; the claim remained that progress depends upon recognition
)f black-white sameness. Let us see through superficial differences to the
ınderlying, equally distributed gift for success. Let us teach ourselves—in
he words of the Garth Brooks tune—to ignore "the color of skin" and
look for . . . the beauty within."

Still further support for the policy once known as "do-nothingism"
:ame from points-of-light barkers, who held that a little something might
)erhaps be done *if* accompanied by enough publicity. Nearly every broad-
:aster and publisher in America moves a bale of reportage on pro bono ef-
orts by white Americans to speed the advance of black Americans. Exam-
)le: McDonald's and the National Basketball Association distribute
)alloons when they announce they are addressing the dropout problem
vith an annual "Stay in School" scheme that gives schoolkids who don't
niss a January school day a ticket to an all-star exhibition. The publicity
trengthens the idea that these initiatives will nullify the social context—
he city I see through my windshield. Reports of white philanthropy sug-
;est that the troubles of this block and the next should be understood as
)henomena in transition. The condition of American blacks need not be
ead as the fixed, unchanging consequence of generations of bottom-caste
xistence. Edging discreetly past a beggar posted near the entrance to
Zabar's or H&H Bagels, or, while walking the dog, stepping politely
round black men asleep on the sidewalk, we need not see ourselves and
)ur fellows as uncaring accomplices in the acts of social injustice.

Yet more powerful has been the ceaseless assault, over the past genera-
ion, on our knowledge of the historical situation of black Americans. On
he face of things it seems improbable that the cumulative weight of doc-
ımented historical injury to African Americans could ever be lightly as-
essed. Gifted black writers continue to show, in scene after scene—in
heir studies of middle-class blacks interacting with whites—how histori-
al realities shape the lives of their black characters. In *Killer of Sheep*, the
)rilliant black filmmaker Charles Burnett dramatizes the daily encounters
hat suck poor blacks into will-lessness and contempt for white fairy tales
)f interracial harmony; he quickens his historical themes with images of
aceless black meat processors gutting undifferentiated, unchoosing ani-
nal life. Here, say these images, as though talking back to Clarence
Thomas, here is a basic level of black life unchanged over generations.
Where there's work, it's miserably paid and ugly. Space allotments at
ıome and at work cramp body and mind. Positive expectation withers in
ınfancy. People fall into the habit of jeering at aspiration as though at the
)idding of physical law. Obstacles at every hand prevent people from lov-
ng and being loved in decent ways, prevent children from believing their
arents, prevent parents from believing they themselves know anything
vorth knowing. The only true self, now as in the long past, is the one
nocked by one's own race. "Shit on you, nigger," says a voice in *Killer of*
heep. "Nothing you say matters a good goddamn."

For whites, these works produce guilt, and for blacks, I can only assume,
ain and despair. The audience for tragedy remains small, while at the mul-
iplex the popular enthusiasm for historical romance remains constant and
ast. During the last two decades, the entertainment industry has conduct-
d a siege on the pertinent past, systematically excising knowledge of the
onsequences of the historical exploitation of African Americans. Facti-
ious renderings of the American past blur the outlines of black-white con-
ict, redefine the ground of black grievances for the purpose of diminishing
he grievances, restage black life in accordance with the illusory conven-

IN THE LAST TWO DECADES, THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY HAS SYSTEMATICALLY IGNORED THE HISTORICAL EXPLOITATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

EACH DAY THE CHANCE OF STRIKING THROUGH THE MASK OF CORPORATE-UNDERWRITTEN, FEEL-GOOD, AHISTORICAL RACISM GROWS MORE REMOTE

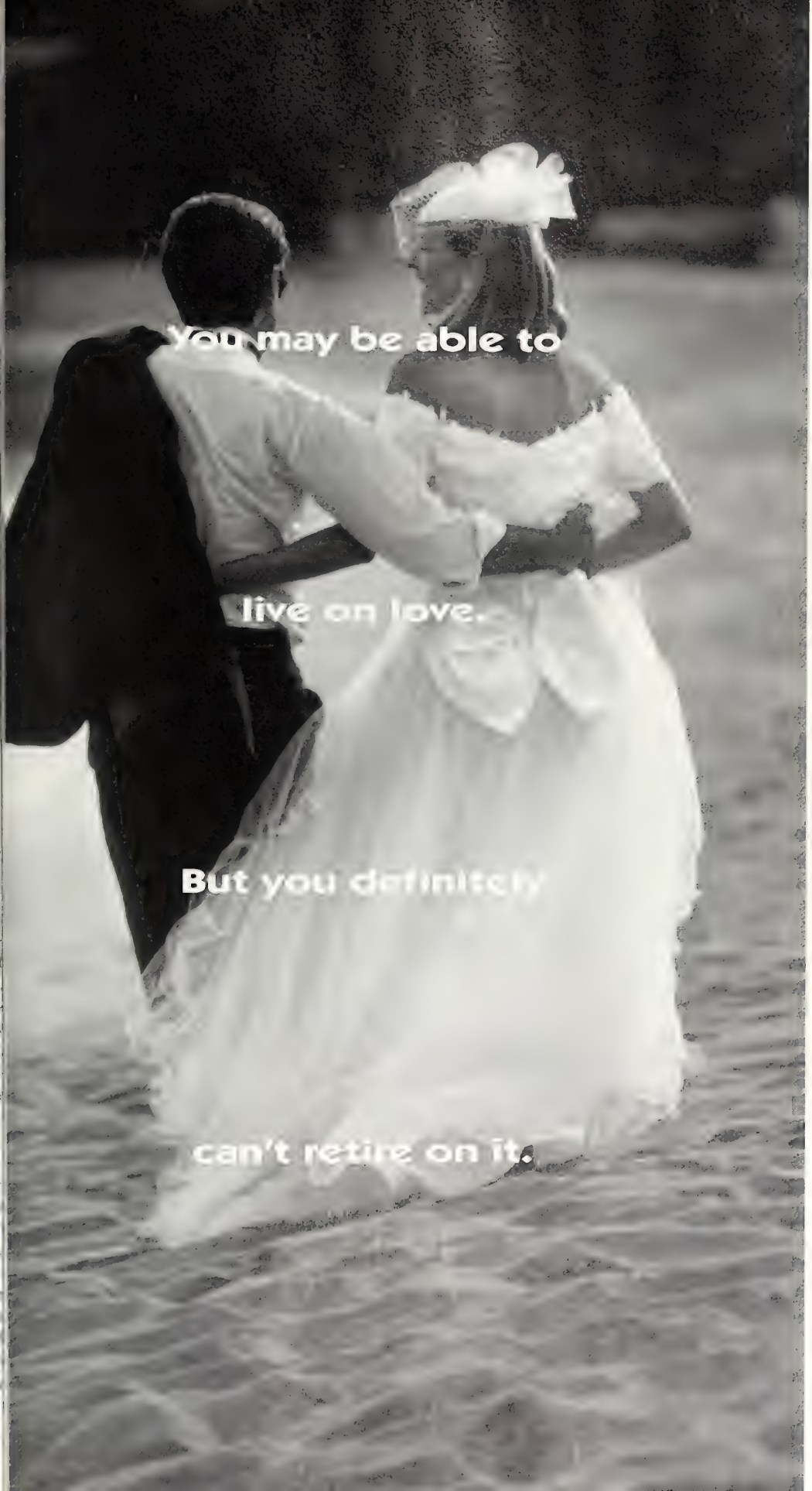
tions of American success mythology, and present the operative influences on race history as the same as those implied to be pivotal in *White Men Can't Jump* or a BellSouth advertisement.

Although there was scant popular awareness of it at the time (1977), the television miniseries *Roots* introduced the figure of the Unscathed Slave. To an enthralled audience of more than 80 million the series intimated that the damage resulting from generations of birth-ascribed, semi-animal status was largely temporary, that slavery was a product of motiveless malignity on the social margins rather than of respectable rationality, and that the ultimate significance of the institution lay in the demonstration, by freed slaves, that no force on earth can best the energies of American Individualism. ("Much like the Waltons confronting the depression," writes historian Eric Foner, a widely respected authority on American slavery, "the family in 'Roots' neither seeks nor requires outside help; individual or family effort is always sufficient.") Ken Burns's much applauded PBS documentary *The Civil War* (1990) went even further than *Roots* in downscaling black injury; the series treated slavery, birth-ascribed inferiority, and the centuries-old denial of dignity as matters of slight consequence. (By "implicitly denying the brutal reality of slavery," writes historian Jeanie Attie, Burns's programs crossed "a dangerous moral threshold." To a group of historians who asked him why slavery had been so slighted, Burns said that any discussion of slavery "would have been lengthy and boring.")

Mass media treatments of the civil rights protest years carried forward the process, contributing to the "positive" erasure of difference. Big-budget films like *Mississippi Burning*, together with an array of TV biographical specials on Dr. Martin Luther King and others, presented the long-running struggle between disenfranchised blacks and the majority white culture as a heartwarming episode of interracial unity; the speed and caringness of white response to the oppression of blacks demonstrated that broadscale race conflict or race difference was inconceivable.

A consciousness that ingests either a part or the whole of this revisionism loses touch with the two fundamental truths of race in America, namely, that because of what happened in the past, blacks and whites can not yet be the same; and that because what happened in the past was no mere matter of ill will or insult but the outcome of an established caste structure that has only very recently begun to be dismantled, it is not reparable by one-on-one goodwill. The word "slavery" comes to induce stock responses with no vital sense of a grinding devastation of mind visited upon generation after generation. Hoodwinked by the orthodoxy of friendship, the nation either ignores the past, summons for it a detached correct "compassion," or gazes at it as though it were a set of aesthetic conventions, like twisted trees and fragmented rocks in nineteenth-century picturesque painting—lifeless phenomena without bearing on the present. The chance of striking through the mask of corporate-underwritten, feel-good, ahistorical racism grows daily more remote. The trade-off—whites promise friendship, blacks accept the status quo—begins to seem like a good deal.

Cosseted by Hollywood's magic lantern and soothed by press releases from Washington and the American Enterprise Institute, we should never forget what we see and hear for ourselves. Broken out by race, the results of every social tabulation from unemployment to life expectancy add up to a chronicle of atrocity. The history of black America fully explains—to anyone who approaches it honestly—how the disaster happened and why neither guilt money nor lectures on personal responsibility can, in and of themselves, repair the damage. The vision of friendship and sympathy placing blacks and whites "all in the same boat," rendering them equally able to do each other favors, "to give rides to one another," is a smiling but monstrous lie.



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LAUGHTER, GUNFIRE, AND FORGETTING

An elusive tale of the Mexican drug war

By Charles Bowden

The air is heavy with the scent of the sea, and the laughter of the beach is near as I stare at the trail of black blood on the road. I pace off the distances: a few puddles here, then scattered droplets for maybe twenty feet, and then the mark of a torrent for another thirty or thirty-five feet. The ocean is calm in the sheltered cove, the gulls are wheeling, and sounds of happiness drift toward me from the nearby private beach club. It is 2:00 P.M. on April 9, 1995, Palm Sunday.

The man standing next to me is explaining. He did not see it. No one ever sees it happen. He works outside the nearby liquor store. He stands there all day with a rag, and when you pull in he attacks your window, hoping you will pay him for his effort. I give him five dollars for coming here and explaining things—which is fine for half an hour's work in a nation where the minimum wage for a full day comes to the equivalent of a few dollars.



ISLA ANGEL DE LA GUARDA IN THE SEA OF CORTEZ

The man tells me that Ramón Salazar Salazar was on the beach when the gunman first found him. Then he fled out here. Look, the man says, this is where the first round hit him, and he points to a black splotch of blood. And he walks along the trail of blood until we come to the place where Ramón went down. That is all the man knows. Which is fine. As for the attendant in the club—well, he saw nothing. He did not see a man flee from his fine private club, he did not see men chase him with guns, he simply saw nothing. Oh yes, he had seen Ramón Salazar Salazar in the club earlier. But nothing else. He did hear the shots, but he was busy at the counter and did not look out the open and wide archway, a simple action that would have enabled him to see everything. Things often do not get seen here.

I am in San Carlos, a small town in the Mexican state of Sonora, 263 miles from the

Charles Bowden is the author of eleven books of non-fiction, including Blood Orchard: An Unnatural History of America, *which was published last month by Random House. The photographs accompanying this article are selected from* The Secret Forest *and* The Sonoran Desert, *both written by Bowden and with photographs by Jack Dykinga.*

American border at Nogales, Arizona. Lining the shore are huge resorts—a Club Med, a Howard Johnson's, the beautiful Plaza de las Glorias. Americans come here. They are the only reason this place exists. Out there in the deep blue water of the Sea of Cortez are sailfish, dolphins, black marlin, tuna, whales. I have known San Carlos since I was a boy, since the road in was a rough dirt track and here and there along the quiet shore stood crude ramadas with Indian fishermen and their families. The men worked off small leaky boats with gill nets. The land itself offered a bizarre beauty. Here the Sonoran desert with its scant rain and giant cactus collides with . . . blue whales. But things change under the relentless hand of progress. They changed swiftly for Ramón Salazar Salazar at about 11:30 A.M. on Sunday April 2. I knew him by a different name: El Guero, "Whitey" in English. He was killed here by federal police, *federales*.

Yet some things do not change here. In the Mexico I have known now for forty years, events move through three phases. First there is what actually happened. Then there are the versions, often inventive, fantastic, and truly creative, describing what really happened. The man was on the beach and chased out here, the man was on the beach and came out here to talk to the authorities. Or the man pulled into the parking lot and was cut down. Or the man pulled into the parking lot and was cut down in front of his wife and mother. I have already heard all these fine versions and more. And then finally an event—say, a murder like this—reaches its final form: it never happened. Usually, what really happened and what never happened are the same thing. The explanations offered in between those two moments are what you must watch out for.

El Guero was forty-two years old. God, he had a smile like a Cheshire cat. I loved that smile. He sold drugs. The *federales* are pledged to fight the drug traffic. I met El Guero almost two years ago, wrote a story about him in which I changed his name, masked locations, and did all manner of things to make sure my words did not interfere with his life. The story possessed a strange quality, an almost fabulous air, and I sensed some people did not feel that it could really be true or that a man such as El Guero could really exist. And now he does not. His blood at my feet is black in the soothing sun. Brown pelicans flap overhead.

I remember when I met El Guero, two years before. The Cinco de Mayo celebrations were just beginning. Soon eighty thousand Sonorans would be on the beach, drunk and singing in celebration of the great victory over the French invaders in the nineteenth century. Out there in the Sea of Cortez, where the seabed is 10,500 feet below the surface, blue whales were moving.

Cinco de Mayo is when horses dance in the arroyo. The riders are usually drunk, the horses are always beautiful, the music is deafeningly loud. All four legs move in time to the beat, the rider tosses his hat to the ground, and then the animal slowly lowers down, all the while his legs keeping time to the music. The rider leans over and retrieves his hat, and then the animal slowly rises to the strains of norteño songs.

SOME PEOPLE DID NOT FEEL THAT A MAN SUCH AS EL GUERO COULD REALLY EXIST. AND NOW HE DOES NOT

At the time, I am sitting in an old hotel in Alamos, forty miles inland against the Sierra Madres. El Guero calls from Mexico City and tells the manager that he is flying in to the small airstrip, that he is coming home for his wedding. Things have been happening all day in the parking lot in front of the hotel, a restored eighteenth-century ruin. A truckload of ice has been dumped on the ground, a truckload of beer is stacked up like a shrine, a big grill is set up, eighty pounds of steak are ready. Bougainvillea blooms from the walls around the hotel, the banana trees move softly in the breeze. I am on the patio by the orchids when the hotel operator shakes my shoulder and says, "I need help. El Guero is pissing in my washing machine."

He is a tall man, over six feet, and lanky, with very fair skin, a mustache, black cowboy boots and hat, Levi's, a short-sleeved sport shirt, and that sudden, flashing smile. He moves with boyish gawkiness, and wherever he goes in the growing crowd he is the center of attention. I immediately like him, he is so alive in the best possible way. A fifteen-piece brass band has come up from Sinaloa—trumpets, drums, tuba, an arsenal of loud devices—and they frame El Guero in their black and lavender costumes. Their bus blocks the entrance to the walled parking lot in front of the hotel, and armed men check the guests upon entry. A group of federal police are here also from the special anti-narcotics strike force. They are Guero's special guests and form a bodyguard that hovers near him. One officer, apparently a helpful man, explains that if one needs, say, a truckload of American liquor brought in without duty, or perhaps a shipment of automatic weapons, well, then just give him a call. I've been told that when two subordinates entered his office to argue about their cut in a drug deal, he promptly shot them

dead. He offers me his business card. His dark eyes have that warmth generally found in psychopaths. He does not smile. He also does not approve of my note taking, but I show El Guero a copy of a book I've written, proclaim myself an author, and become sanctioned under the blazing warmth of his smile.

I am fearful of the guests but intrigued. The drug business in the United States grosses $100 billion a year, or $200 billion—no one really knows—and most of it now is flowing through Mexico, and much of what flows through Mexico is roaring across the desert surface of Sonora. Mexican economists speculate that the drug traffic between Mexico and the United States equals or exceeds all other exports to the U.S. combined. And here I am inside the machine—drug dealers milling about, steaks cooking, the *federale* anti-narcotic strike force drinking, everyone watching El Guero. He sits in a chair, and one by one people come up and squat next to him, subjects having an audience with a monarch. He is a legend—for the moment. Has he killed? Seven men, I am told. What is his connection? He works for the Engineer? Who is that? Just the Engineer, a very big man in the Guadalajara cartel put together in times past by Rafael Caro Quintero and others. El Guero smiles at everyone and everyone smiles at him. He is the hometown hero, the man who brings suitcases of money into this pueblo of hunger.

DRUG DEALERS ARE MILLING ABOUT, EVERYONE IS WATCHING EL GUERO. HE IS A LEGEND—FOR THE MOMENT

The party is El Guero's second stab at marrying the bride-to-be. He has created a new kind of fete, the *boda falsa,* the "false wedding." In January he partied for five days, and, as now, he rented two old inns, had a band, the mountain of beer, the endless supply of twelve-year-old Scotch, a throng of drug dealers and federal police. And forgot to get married. When I ask why the groom keeps hosting weddings and does not get married, I am given a look as if I were a hopeless child: "Because El Guero loves getting married." Guadelupe is beautiful, about twenty, hair colored blonde, and a smile to match her groom's. The band is playing, Guero and his bride dance briefly, and then they sit in two chairs in the center of the parking lot and hold court for hours. Early in the evening, the hotel manager gets alarmed at all the weapons carried by the guests and calls the mayor, demanding that the police come and seize this arsenal. The mayor is sympathetic but explains, "I cannot do anything. El Guero has more firepower than I do."

Five days and nights of roaring music, booze, women, drugs, and maybe even a wedding if we get around to it. Lupe, as she is known, is a Palma—from the big drug cartel family seated in Culiacán and operating from there to wherever an American has a hungry nose. Her father has told Guero to marry her or he will kill him. It is not a family in which such talk is idle boasting; it is 1993, and there is war going on. People say there is a lot of lead in the air, people say it is time to cull the herd.

During the party I get out in the *campo* and talk to a *campesino* I know. He explains that yesterday in a nearby village two men brought a horse caravan of marijuana out of the sierra. On their way down they killed a deer and when they arrived in the village promptly made venison stew. They were sitting down to their meal when the *federales* arrived, instantly killed them, took their load, and delivered it on time to the people expecting it. Culling the herd, slaughtering the independents, the competitors. True laissez-faire capitalism. All this happens while the party rolls on for five days, and no doubt the *federales* at the fiesta had their hand in this bit of law enforcement. When I drive back from that village in the *campo* on a dirt road that leads into the Sierra Madre, an expensive pickup truck with dark-tinted windows roars into view, aims straight at me, and forces me off the road. The danger in the air now is palpable.

El Guero is explaining to me that he did a stretch in prison in the United States. Ah, but then that wonderful smile. He continues, "But they treated me very nice." He lays down a force field of pleasure wherever he goes; the band never stops. Lupe is on a dancing horse in the front of the hotel, the animal moves gracefully to the music, and she sits astride the horse like a goddess. It is easy to forget the lead in the air for a while, easy to forget that Lupe's kinsman (his name is whispered to me with the warning: *Never say this name out loud*) heard a knock at the door one day. It was a messenger with a package. He accepted the box and when he opened it found his wife's severed head. Or there is the often heard but unverifiable rumor about a light aircraft skimming the desert at about five hundred feet. The door opened and the man's two teenage children were pitched out and floated briefly before they thudded into the hot ground. These are the things that are forgotten.

Now I want a glass of wine and order a drink. Guero leans over. "Don't order a glass, get a bottle on me. I do not do little things."

I am working my way through the bottle of red wine. Lupe is still on the horse dancing. The *federales* are scattered about watching everything with cold eyes. The party has been roaring now for four or five days. Calls have been made to the state capital, but no one in the government has any record of El Guero. In fact, the *federales* handing out their business cards do not exist either, according to state officials. Things happen, then there are various and fantastic versions of what happened, and then things never really happened at all.

El Guero is explaining. His teeth gleam, his eyes sparkle. He says, "I am in the meat business. And I think it is time for me to go and sell a little more meat."

Then he is gone. He leaves a mountain of debt; in fact, nothing he and his guests have consumed for five days is paid for. No one is terribly alarmed. The meat business has a wonderful, but irregular, cash flow. El Guero has done this in the past, and then he will show up in a month or so and if he owes you, say, two grand he'll pay you with three grand. Everyone succumbs to his smile.

For almost two years I pursue the world of the man who insists I have a bottle of wine, not a glass. I do not really know why I do this beyond the simple but real fact that I like him. And because I sense he is doing what any ambitious human being would do in this town. He is refusing to stay in his place, to live in poverty with no hope of a better tomorrow. At first it promises to be very easy. He tells me he is coming to Tucson, and hell, we'll visit. Beyond that, the wedding has once again failed to be completed, and the word is that his next stab at matrimony will be in September at the celebration of Mexican independence.

But soon there are troubling signs. A *federale* lieutenant at the party dies a few days later in the capital. He takes a woman, a bottle of Scotch, and some cocaine to a hotel room. His heart stops, I am told, and he dies with a white mustache. When a record check is run, the authorities tell me they know nothing of this man, have no record of such a name. Yet I have a photograph of him. He is sitting next to Guero smiling, one hand cradling a bottle of beer, the other clutching a cigarette. But the photo is an illusion. He never existed, never happened. In Mexico, if someone wishes to say you have ambition, they say you have illusions. Now he is an illusion, because obviously he never existed and the photograph with his eyes staring clear out, well, it tells us nothing, don't you see?

There is something else I must mention. No one at this five-day blowout ever seems afraid of El Guero. They come, they pay homage, but they do not seem afraid. Nor am I. We are animals, all of us, and we can sense that El Guero is not dangerous. He is doing coke, he has a pistol sticking out of his back pocket, he has that wonderful smile and that beautiful bride-to-be, and he is not dangerous. I can feel the affection for him coming from the people of the town.



POOL HALL ON THE ALAMEDA IN ALAMOS

I ask a Mexican if there is a corrido sung about El Guero. He says no, not yet, that he'll get a corrido when he is killed.

The next time I am this close to El Guero I will be standing at the foot of his fresh grave.

As a child, El Guero was the punching bag for the other kids in his school. He was one of nine brothers and four sisters. His father was the secretary to the *presidente*—a title that in the United States would entail being a kind of county boss. Alamos is the center of a political division that holds sixty-three villages, and Guero's father stayed in his executive assistant post as the *presidentes* came and went. The family is middle-class in the Mexican sense: they have a simple house two or three blocks from the public market and they all eat.

I am sitting on a hillside in Alamos listening to his boyhood friends. We begin drinking at 8:00 A.M. and will go well past dark. One man sits on the ground surrounded by empty cans

and his dark eyes burn as he says, "When I was a young boy I would get up at 4:00 A.M., and there were nine of us kids, and my mother would give me three tortillas for breakfast. Then I would milk the cow and carry the milk down into town to Guero's family. They always had a huge platter on their table and it overflowed with fresh tortillas. The woman who worked for them would slip me a few on the sly, and I have never forgotten those tortillas."



CAMPESINO WITH BUFFEL GRASS CUT FOR CATTLE

Guero's family, the man says, was abusive. His brothers picked on him, his mother did not like him, nor it seems did his father. He became an altar boy. When he was fifteen he disappeared. The known story of his life resumes in Guadalajara. He is eighteen now and has a stand in the park where he sells Bibles. He also has been working in a mortuary cleaning up the corpses, painting their faces. He has fallen in with some other young guys, and they do a little robbing and sell a little dope. But Guero has a dream: he is going to enroll in a university and get a college degree. Then he will be able to put the honorific after his name that all Mexicans desire: *licenciado*, "college graduate." But it takes money. Soon Guero is peddling Bibles from Guadalajara to Tijuana, and now in the Bibles he places packets of cocaine. "Bibles," another man drinking on the hill explains, "are very popular with mafiosos. They like to cut out the center and carry guns in them."

What about the killings, I ask, the seven fabled killings?

"Guero," the first man says firmly, "is not a killer. He has never killed anyone. I know killers; they are always watching their backs. But Guero's eyes are relaxed. He hasn't the nerve to kill. I used to beat him up."

The man wants me to understand the hungers that grow in this place, in this semi-tropical ground where marijuana and opium poppies flourish in the sierras that surround us. He lives in a tiny house with the water faucet in the yard. He has never owned so much as a sink. He now has one dream: that he and his woman will have a room of their own. He knows this will never happen, but still he has this dream. We drink for a long time, as I said. When we are done he will be hung-over for three solid days.

Guero, I learn, has lived with a deep hunger. Sometime in the early or middle 1980s, he shows up in Hermosillo, Sonora, the state capital, and enrolls in the university. He studies one to two years. He is going to be a lawyer. Then one summer he takes off for Colorado, where a sister lives. He is busted for selling drugs and spends a year or two in prison. He does not waste his time: he studies English. After he gets out he does not go back to school. It is all a blur, these years, this scratching for a living. He marries an American woman and has a child in the Pacific Northwest. He is in Tijuana, Alamos, and points south. Scratching for a peso, for a deal. Then in 1990 or 1991—no one is quite sure anymore—he hooks up with the Engineer. Guero has talent. He is warm, he is bright, he enters a room or he enters a cartel and he insinuates himself, he worms his way in, smiling all the way, making jokes, grasping ideas and needs very swiftly. So he meets the Engineer.

The major cartels in Mexico are often seething with change and murder, and Guero has found one of the largest and most clever. The boss of the moment is named Amado Carrillo, who runs everything from Guadalajara north, with his product flowing across Chihuahua and Sonora on the U.S. border. The Engineer is his management expert. Guero charms his way into becoming some kind of broker on shipments—not a small matter. By 1995, 70 percent of all the cocaine going up gringo noses will flow through Sonora. Suddenly, for Guero, there is the scent of real money in the air. We will never know how much money. The cartel on the Gulf of Mexico, for example, is suspected of having a cash flow of ten to twenty billion dollars a year. When the boss of Ciudad Juarez, opposite El Paso, is mowed down in the spring of 1993, the Mexican government seizes $500 million of his real estate. Among his many doodads is his estate at Acapulco, once a retreat of the Shah of Iran. The numbers do not really mat-

ter that much. They are big on paper, but in the sierra they are pesos.

Here is how it works for Guero. He will come to, say, Alamos with a suitcase of money, perhaps $100,000. The men who work for him, the men with pistols who danced so wildly at the false wedding, will gather. In fact, the would-be wedding itself was actually a business meeting. He will give them money, and they will go up into the parts of the Sierra Madre that they control and bankroll the *campesinos* so they can buy seed and put in a crop. Perhaps they rule over a village or two. There is a fat woman up there who is said to be very good with a 9 mm, and they give people like her money and she gets the peasants to plant. Then ninety or a hundred days later the crop—and in Sonora there are usually two—is harvested, brought down, and hidden in caves while the federal police are going through their charade of being federal police. Payment is now made. Perhaps one little *jefe*, "boss," from the sierra has brought down two or three hundred kilos. He is given money to pay the peasants—200 pesos a kilo, at the time a little less than $15 a pound. That is Guero's work. He pays off the boys in the sierra who pay off the *pobres*, "the poor folks," and then Guero pays off the *federales* so that the load can move. For this he gets women, he gets a red pickup truck, he gets to buy a little house, a small *rancho*, and most of all he gets to think he will get full, get satisfied. The gringos are dropping a hundred billion, two hundred billion a year on drugs. This is very good. But down here the world is pesos, down here a man gets out of bed and works eight hours and if he is lucky gets his few dollars a day. Down here women smile, the parrots scream from the trees, the fields are worked with hoes, and the drugs go north relentlessly. And down here you die.

By 1992 Guero is in Tijuana. Even with his connection to the Engineer, life can be uneven. He is living in a motel room. His brother is there, so is his mother, so is his American wife and child. He and his brother are selling jewelry on the streets, scratching for that peso. His mother is a woman of very few smiles, and the American wife cannot take her coldness and leaves with the child. She hitches a ride back to the States. Guero and his brother lie in their room and drink heavily, and then something snaps in Guero. He turns off the tape player and says he is tired of this life. He can surely hear footsteps, for in the drug business old age is not a realistic option.

Yet at Cinco de Mayo, 1993, he is in Alamos hosting his *boda falsa*. He is back to selling dope. He is in love, truly in love. Lupe is his woman now and increasingly his life. He promises that he will be back in two or three weeks with the money. The crop is already in. He simply has to move it, and then everyone will be paid.

But on May 24, 1993, in the Guadalajara airport, Juan Jesús Cardinal Posadas Ocampo is chauffeured in his fine car to the parking lot in front of the terminal. He is there to meet the papal nuncio. Some people open his car door and put at least a dozen rounds into the cardinal. The details and lies about this killing are too many to explicate, but the important fact is that Guero's organization, the outfit in which the Engineer thrives and by which Guero is able to eat and pretend to be full, is implicated in the killing. From that moment on Guero is hunted.

DOWN HERE THE PARROTS SCREAM FROM THE TREES AND THE DRUGS GO NORTH RELENTLESSLY. AND DOWN HERE YOU DIE

After that there are sightings or reports of sightings. A heroin dealer tells of knowing him in Nogales, Sonora. A report comes in that he has been arrested in Chihuahua but released—no doubt using phony identification papers. It is tough; the killing is intricate and widespread. In part it is bloodletting between the various cartels; in part it is *federales* culling the herd, thinning out independent drug operators who fail to pay them off. And always when there is real killing, it is done by the state, the government of Mexico. No serious business operates in Mexico without the government's permission, and always if there is cash flow in an enterprise the government takes its slice.

Months pass. El Guero is still hunted. On November 25, 1993, two men and their families are dining in the very fine restaurant Ochoa Bali-Hai in Mexico City. They are Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the head of the Guadalajara cartel, and Manuel Miranda Urrutia, the Engineer. El Guero is with them. He has wormed his way in, near the very throne of power. No one gets close to men like Carrillo or the Engineer by accident. Before such men even enter a restaurant it is swept by bodyguards and secured.

This day as Carrillo and the Engineer and their entourage dine, seven men enter the establishment carrying AK-47s. They fire at least seventy-five rounds. Amado Carrillo dives under a table and lives. Miranda is killed. In their escape, the gunmen run over a policeman who tries to stop their car. They back up, get out, and spray him with a few bursts for good measure. Or Carrillo and his bodyguards kill the policeman. El Guero somehow escapes, but no place is safe now. With the Engineer dead, he has no patron, no protector. Seven

months later, in June of 1994, a party held by relatives of Caro Quintero in Guadalajara is blown up by a car bomb. One of the two dead men is linked to the killing of the cardinal. The details cease to matter. The world is not safe, especially for an ex–Bible salesman who lacks the guts to kill.

Guero needs a new patron. He goes to the Palma family, Lupe's people, and expends his charms, seeking his way in. He goes to Tijuana, where the Arrellano brothers, the boys generally given credit for killing the cardinal, operate and tries to find a niche. But nothing seems to work. Everything is going badly. People who investigate these crimes, well, they seem to be murdered at a steady clip. Guero becomes a ghost—ah, he is seen in Nogales, he is arrested briefly in Chihuahua, he is in Tijuana looking for that niche. He comes to people in Alamos and wishes to borrow some bedsheets. He is going into the *campo* and must flap the sheets in the air to signal a plane into the drop site. At one point he and Lupe reappear in Alamos. He is not really safe there, but he is esteemed. The couple comes to the old hotel where their wedding that was not a wedding occurred. They look at the building wistfully and then walk off. Lupe is pregnant. Guero can smile, he can charm, he can sell Bibles, but he cannot kill. And now it is the time of the killers.

EL GUERO WILL BE THAT SMILING MEXICAN AMERICAN TOURISTS LOVE—THE MEXICAN WHO PROTECTS THEM FROM MEXICO

It is December 1994. The peso has collapsed, a rebellion in Chiapas has been sputtering for a year, the assistant attorney general of Mexico in charge of drug enforcement for six months has resigned, having deposited millions of dollars in a Houston bank account during his six months of service. El Guero is walking through the lobby of an American hotel ten blocks from my house in Tucson, Arizona, when he apparently spots them. They are *madrinas*, the auxiliary of the Mexican federal police that handles the messy and dirty killings. *Madrina* means "bridesmaid," and according to the Mexican government they do not exist. But there are too many people in the hotel lobby, and Guero escapes. A week or so later he is in Alamos, and when people ask him about payment on the debt for that false wedding he smiles that wonderful smile and he says, do not worry, you will be paid soon. He displays *federale* credentials issued in his name. And then he laughs and they laugh with him. He is a father now, and what he loves to do is play with his daughter.

Then he is buying a house in Hermosillo with his brothers. He has a house in the coastal resort community of San Carlos, Sonora. He has his little *ranchito* just outside of Alamos. I watch for him out of the corner of my eye, but I never catch a glimpse.

The killing ground comes into view on a sunny day by the sea. For the past few days Guero has been, well, his former self. That smile. He is relaxed, content. He tells his mother he has paid all his debts. He is out. He is free. And this is a very good day. His sister has just graduated from the university with a degree in journalism, and the family is gathering on the beach at San Carlos to celebrate this fact. There is other good news. Guero has rented a yacht. He is going to take tourists out and tell them of fish and whales and the coast and the magic of a desert colliding with an ocean. The gringos will give him good money for this work. He is going to be that smiling Mexican that American tourists love—the Mexican who protects them from Mexico. He is forty-two years old, it is April 2, 1995, and he has a new and good life. He is going to be a tour guide, husband, father. He is out, you see.

El Guero does not know that two days earlier the *madrinas* were in Alamos driving a green Jeep Cherokee, one stolen in Arizona, and looking for Ramón Salazar Salazar, also known as El Guero. It is likely that they are the same men who were in the hotel lobby in Tucson in December to kill him. Now as El Guero drives from Hermosillo to San Carlos for the family celebration, drives with his wife and mother and child and brothers and sister, the *madrinas* are in a fancy hotel a few miles away from the resort, a facility with a nice pool, a restaurant, a disco, a steak house. They are patient.

El Guero turns down a new road by the sea that leads into the district called Shangri-la. The road is paved with new blocks mimicking ancient cobblestones. Freshly transplanted palms line the drive. It ends in a cul-de-sac where a private club guards a private beach. Here he deposits his wife and child, his mother and sister. The sign on the club warns that the management is not responsible for accidents, that there are no lifeguards. Inside through the open archway, past the attendant checking memberships, is a beautiful beach studded with palm-frond shelters, a pool with a poolside bar, chaise longues. Sun and serenity. The brothers drop off their passengers, wheel around, and head for the nearby liquor store. They buy four cartons of beer and then head back a hundred yards or so to the beach. He is not wearing a

un, there are no weapons in the truck. He is ruly out.

As they pull into the dead-end parking place, green Jeep Cherokee with American plates oars up and blocks the exit. Four men are in he vehicle and two get out. They both carry AR-15s. They wear the uniforms of the *federales*. El Guero steps away from the truck where his brothers sit and walks toward the *federales*. This is, one brother tells me, his last honorable act. He is leading the killers away rom his family.

The two *federales* ask, "What are you working on?"

El Guero says, "Why are you asking?"

They stand there and then Guero says, "Go head, kill me."

One *federale* replies, "I am going to kill you."

El Guero seems to snap. He says, "Please, I lon't want any more trouble. Why don't you eave me alone. Let me rest in peace. Please on't kill me."

He begins pawing weakly at the man with he gun. Ramón Salazar Salazar, also known as El Guero, does not have the stomach for illing. He has lived a false image of toughness. The first round hits him in his upper left rm, the second under his ribs on his left side. The AR-15 weighs 7.1 pounds, the bullet 55 rains, and this slug of metal is moving at ,240 feet per second and delivering about ,282 foot-pounds of energy per square inch. The *federales* favor soft bullets, the kind in which the core and the jacket separate when hey hit flesh and then spiral through the tissue. Such a load when fired at a coyote from, ay, a hundred yards creates red mist; the animal simply becomes vapor. Guero throws his rms up like someone being crucified and staggers and then falls on his face on the hard locks of paving. The *madrina* moves forward nd puts four more into his back. The bullets ass through his body, hit the pavement, and ounce back as shrapnel. With each round his ody jerks up off the ground from the explosion. His brothers, one with a gun to his head, ee this. They are being made to watch. They re being left alive because someone wants witnesses to report what has happened.

Then the *federales* drive off. It is 11:30 A.M., unday, April 2, at the beach at the fine resort f San Carlos, Sonora. Guero's mother and ife and child and sister come out into the arking lot. The brothers throw Guero into he back of his red pickup truck, the others follow in another car, and they rush to the nearby medical center. On the short drive, Guero aises his head to speak, but one brother tells im, no, you'll be okay, tell me later. At the nedical center, they go in to get a stretcher. But this request is refused because they have failed to follow the proper procedures. They are told they should have waited with their wounded brother at the parking lot for the ambulance. This delay over the matter of a stretcher does not really matter. Guero dies in the bed of his truck with his mother and others watching, while he struggles to say words he is never able to say.

Ramón Salazar Salazar is a very small matter. Yet when discussing his murder by the *federales*, the Sonoran newspapers describe him as that final drop of blood that causes a glass filled with gore from *federale* murders in Sonora finally to overflow. His killing focuses the attention of everyone on this homicidal habit of the government. But of the four men who sat in the green Jeep Cherokee, only one is arrested, Amílkar Mendoza Ruiz. First the *federales* pick him up, take him to their nearby base, let him shower and shave and change clothes. Then a detail weighs in. El Guero's brother is the equivalent of the federal district attorney in the border city of Nogales, Sonora, and when he calls his opposite number in the district of the murder scene, the *madrina* is turned over by the *federales*. When the suspect finally enters the office to comply with the request of the judicial authorities, he is laughing and shaking hands with everyone there. He does not seem alarmed by the charges he may face. As for the other three men in the truck, well, no one can find them. Two are not *madrinas* at all but major men in major operations in Tijuana. Apparently they were there to see that the killing went down in the manner they had paid for. You have more questions? If I knew the answers, I would be dead.

For a while there is a brief to-do. In the state legislature of Sonora, all the parties denounce the killing. The governor of the state denounces the killing. For three days the newspapers describe Guero as a businessman from Alamos. Then, on the fourth day, the press announces it has discovered that he had a very powerful godfather named Amado Carrillo. Then the killing goes away. The newspapers fall silent. Life moves on.

Ah, you ask, why was he killed? Drugs? No, not drugs. If he owed money and he was killed, then there is not much chance he could pay his debt. Also, to send a message in the drug world, you tie a man's hands behind his back, put a bullet through his head, and leave the body on the edge of town. That is all it takes to deliver a message not to talk or cheat on a deal or horn in on someone else's territory. This killing was deliberately public. Why? I'll tell you what I think; I don't care. El Guero was killed because

he knew something, and if I knew that something, that little thing, I would still not know any more than I know now. His killer will walk, this week or next week or the week after that. Already the local *federale* commander has been transferred "for poor management," according to the government. Who cares? Guero's killer was just working for someone who had money. His killer is a detail and the man or the men who paid him will never spend a night in jail. As for Guero: his heart stopped.

In Alamos his death is a great sorrow. He was murdered on Sunday, and he goes to the *campo santo* on Tuesday. Hundreds come to the funeral. They are poor, the people who cannot afford shoes. You see, Guero was always broke, he always gave his money away. Ah, your baby is sick, here have some money; ah, you are hungry, here have some food. There is a big procession to the ground where he is laid to rest beside his father. There are bands and much singing. Bursts are fired during the procession. Or as the clods of earth hit his coffin, bursts are fired. Or bursts are never fired. I have heard all three versions. Soon there will be the next version. He never existed, it never happened.

HARD FACTS SLOWLY DISSOLVE BEFORE YOUR EYES. THE MARCH OF EVENTS, THE LOGICAL CONNECTIONS, BECOME ILLUSIONS

There is a quality to Mexico that is difficult for people such as me to grasp—this matter of things existing and yet not really existing. Hard facts slowly dissolve before your eyes. The orderly march of events, the connections we create with logic, these things become illusions. You are left with your drink, the warm sun, the tropical air, the lust of the flowers and bullets of alleged facts, events, positions . . . President Carlos Salinas de Gortari is opening the country up to free trade and billions of dollars of foreign investment at the same time the population is sinking slowly into economic quicksand. His hand-chosen successor, Luis Donaldo Colosio, is having dinner with him on a terrace by the sea in the early hours of New Year's Day, 1994, at the exact moment a bunch of Indians with a few weapons are exploding the triumphs of Salinas's five-and-a-half-year rule in the jungles of Chiapas. By late March, a bullet courses through Colosio's brain while he walks through a barrio in Tijuana, and for the next year everyone who looks into this matter seems to die. By August, Ernesto Zedillo de Ponce Leon, Colosio's campaign manager, is elected the next president of Mexico in a stolen election that the Americans celebrate as less dirty than usual. By September, Salinas's former brother-in-law, the number-two man in the ruling party, is murdered in broad daylight in the streets of Mexico City. Two months later the man's brother, who is in charge of investigating the murder, resigns, claiming his search for justice is being blocked by the government. By February, he in turn is a fugitive with a nice $10 million bank account that mushroomed in a Houston bank in six short months while he led Mexico's war on drugs. Then ex-President Salinas's brother, Raul, is arrested for the murder of Salinas's former brother-in-law, and, of course, the dead man's brother is accused of covering up for Raul. Then former President Salinas goes on a hunger strike for a couple of days and ventures into exile. Along the way, the peso and the entire economy collapse, the head of the federal police is poisoned by his own bodyguards on Christmas Eve, the son of the newly inaugurated president survives an attempted carjacking by state police in Mexico City. Ramón Salazar Salazar, a man known as El Guero, is murdered by federal police near a lovely beach in San Carlos, Sonora. There is more, much more, but it helps us very little. It is history as confetti, little snippets of events and tragedies fluttering to earth in no meaningful pattern. Or it is history as conspiracy, one so vast that there is no reason to explore its details since its tentacles are everywhere and the cause of everything. And after a while, history becomes simply political platitudes or a corrido sung in a bar. El Guero was murdered in a political hit because he knew something, or he was snuffed out by drug enforcement officers, or he is a trivial being who never really existed anyway—black blood at my feet that will be washed away by the life-giving summer rains.

I am at his grave. The day is warm and beautiful. The orchids are in bloom, tongues of yellow lust. His tomb is a few tiers of burnt adobe bricks, an icing of lime spilling down the side, a heap of wilted flowers resting on top. Yesterday I was interviewing people about him, and I sat and drank and all I could really hear as I made notes was the scream of macaws. Now I look at the fresh grave in the chaos of the *campo santo*. I pay an urchin to stand by the tomb while I snap a few shots—we must have scale. Soon it will be Cinco de Mayo, the dancing horses will return, the harvest will be in, the business will be taken care of.

He is but a drop in a glass overflowing with blood. He now sleeps under a simple marker that says: "E.P.D. En Paz Descanso, Rest in Peace." And they have written a song about El

uero; he has finally died, he has earned his rrido, "El Guero, Licenciado." The Light-kinned Man, the Graduate. In the song, El uero is moving north across Mexico. He has suitcase full of money and a young daughter. e is intent on paying off a debt he owes in ie drug world. He shoots his way through am-ushes and makes it to the United States. here the American police murder him. But is young daughter escapes with the suitcase of oney, and she pays off her father's debt so iat he is free of such a burden.

I find the message of this song to be very oving. It tells what really happened to the man who very soon will never have existed at all.

I remember a year or two ago talking to a lexican about Guero. I had my normal curios-y, but he waved aside my questions. Guero as his friend, but still he could not approve of y interest. He said, "Guero is a nothing. He oes not matter. In a year, two years, he will be ead, someone will kill him. He is not impor-nt." I know that despite these harsh words ie man was not being unfeeling or superior. s he waved his hand, dismissing even the idea El Guero, he wore around his neck a gold iain Guero had impulsively given him. I un-erstand now what he was trying to tell me: all e young men, all the El Gueros, are doomed. he world of drugs is too big to stop, too vi-ous to survive, and too necessary to shut own. Actually, in Mexico the drug business is st another name for an old fact of life: Here, prosper, you must break laws, you must in me sense be a bandit in a bandit culture. You ust outfox the government or go hungry.

In the United States, the El Gueros are not ewed in that light. After the killing, after lking to people in Sonora and pacing my way rough the murder scene, I drove back to the ates and went to a gun shop. I wanted to ake sure of the ballistics of the AR-15, I anted to ride the bullets through his body. ie store featured Uzis and ARs and AKs, a ace where *federales* on their visits to the ates stock up on guns and ammo. For half an our or an hour, I walked the staff through the urder, did everything but draw a chalk out-ie of the body on the store's floor. They were ry helpful. One man had handled the AR in ietnam and told me he'd winged a guy in the m at fifty yards and seen the arm fly off. The erks got the very load favored by the *federales* own from the shelf. Like all cartridges, the und looked beautiful and obscene at the me time. I finally said, "Look, from what you e telling me, if I were hit by one round from AR-15 with this load I would have to be in the waiting room at the Mayo clinic to have even a prayer of surviving."

The two men looked at me with surprise, and then one said, "No, you don't understand. You would have to be in the operating room when you were shot to have any hope at all."

Finally, they asked who the victim was. I told them the name and said he was a drug dealer.

They looked at me with hard eyes and said, "Good riddance." I said nothing. I understand the unquestioned beliefs of my fellow citizens.



El Dia de los Muertos in Alamos

In Mexico, things have another appearance. After the murder of El Guero, the man who a year or so ago had dismissed his importance with a contemptuous wave of the hand sat with me for hours trying to explain things. He said, "I know a lot of these guys, and 80 to 90 percent of them are nice guys. They're just like everyone else, there is nothing wrong with them. They're normal guys." People, I suspect, who want to feel full. Next time you are down this way, one of them will take you out as a guide in the Sea of Cortez and explain the beauty of it all to you. Blue whales will be diving and saying loud things we cannot understand. Or perhaps in Alamos, a small town nestled against the green rise of the Sierra Madre, a fiesta will be unfolding and the horses will dance with their drunken riders slouched in the saddle while a corrido blares, possibly a song we will not understand, a song called "El Guero, Licenciado." ■

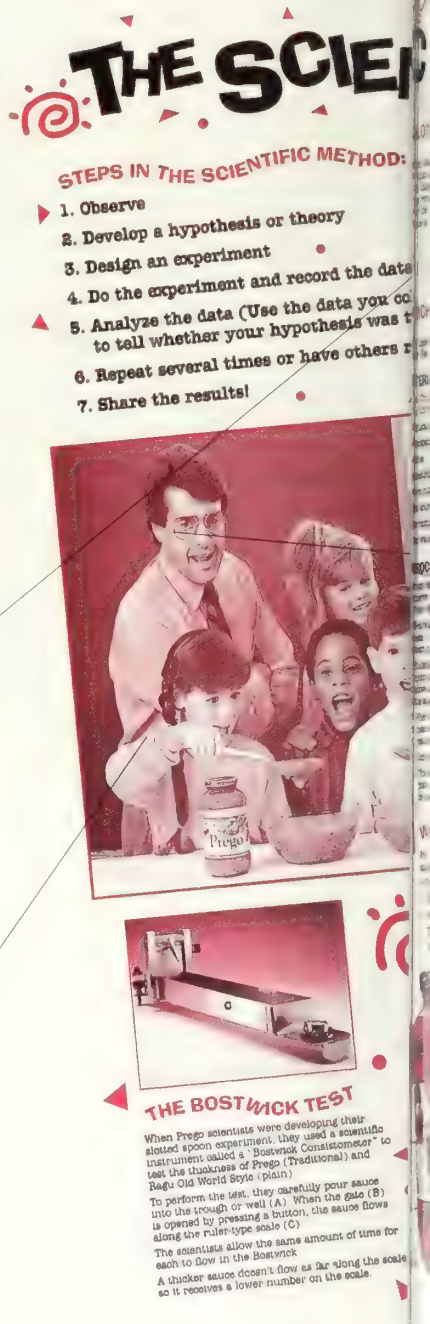
THE PEDAGOG

Pretending to help teachers, Campbe

Once upon a time, the American classroom was safe from the seductions of commerce. Today, however, advertisers are busily targeting the 50 million children and teenagers who spend half their waking hours in the classroom, a market potentially worth $200 billion. The poster at right, for instance, was distributed free to 12,000 primary and secondary school teachers across the U.S. by the Campbell Soup Company, maker of Prego spaghetti sauce. The poster comes with a lesson plan, a slotted spoon, and a coupon for a 30-ounce jar of Prego Traditional sauce. Students are instructed to predict whether Prego or Ragu Old World Style is thicker, and to conduct an experiment to test their hypothesis. They're told that the experiment has not been performed correctly unless Prego is proven to be thicker. Educators who think that the woes of Chris Whittle's Channel One meant the end of such in-class advertising are in for a stern lesson: companies that blend ads into conventional classroom materials—textbooks, filmstrips, videos—have signed up at least 350 corporations and claim that students use their materials more than 63 million times every year. Elementary mathematics indeed!

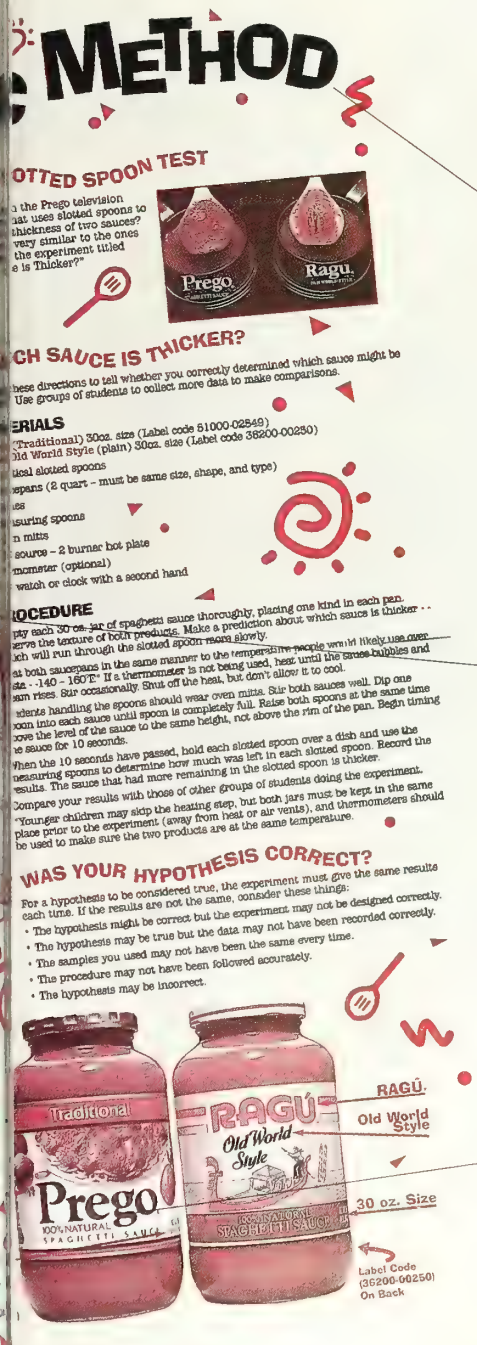
The goal of any in-class promotion is to establish continuity with brand advertising. But because corporate-designed lesson plans require an educational facade, advertisers have in the past relied on subtle tricks to hawk their products. No longer. Since the Prego TV commercial "Which Sauce Is Thicker?" already had a pseudo-scientific conceit, Campbell's ad team saw an opportunity for a direct tie-in. Other companies are doing the same: General Mills has sent 8,000 teachers a science curriculum on volcanoes entitled "Gushers: Wonders of the Earth," which uses the company's Fruit Gushers candy. In Hunt-Wesson's "Kernels of Knowledge" history lesson, Orville Redenbacher is grouped with Gregor Mendel, Louis Pasteur, and George Washington Carver as a scientist and inventor "who made a difference."

Note that the figures in this model classroom are flagrantly *not* following any of the specific directions given in the "procedure." There are no hot plates, no thermometers, no oven mitts, no measuring spoons. The slotted spoons are raised way above the bowls, as opposed to "no higher than above the rim." No one is timing the experiment or recording the results. The lesson is, "Don't worry about directions—just have fun with the sauce." By projecting a lighthearted image, the makers of Prego seek to involve children in a purchasing decision from which they are normally excluded.



F PASTA SAUCE

ches consumerism, *by David Shenk*



This simple "experiment" is designed to be the young student's first foray into the rigorous world of science. Thus, the poster is riddled with such scientific terms as "hypothesis," "theory," and "prove." But not one of these words is used correctly: a hypothesis can be called a "theory" only if it has withstood many tests designed to prove it false. In this lesson, the two terms are used interchangeably. Moreover, real scientists don't waste their time formulating hypotheses to "prove" simple observations: *it is snowing; the sky is blue*. And why should we care about the thickness of spaghetti sauce anyway? Why pick Ragu and not, say, Newman's Own? The answer is that mentioning a competing brand benefits your product only if your rival is more popular.

Why are thousands of well-meaning educators caving in to such crass exploitation of their students? One answer is that school boards are under greater pressure than ever to cut costs. Poorly funded school districts are the most likely to fall for the corporate pitch, because prefab lesson plans save preparation time and provide relief for overburdened teachers. Like all fake lesson plans, this poster comes with a number of time-consuming "extension" activities. A similar campaign, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association's "Chocolate Challenge" board game, takes several hours to guide youngsters in grades four through six through history with such quiz questions as "Was it: a) Thomas Jefferson or b) Daniel Peter who first spoke of 'the superiority of chocolate for both health and nourishment'?"

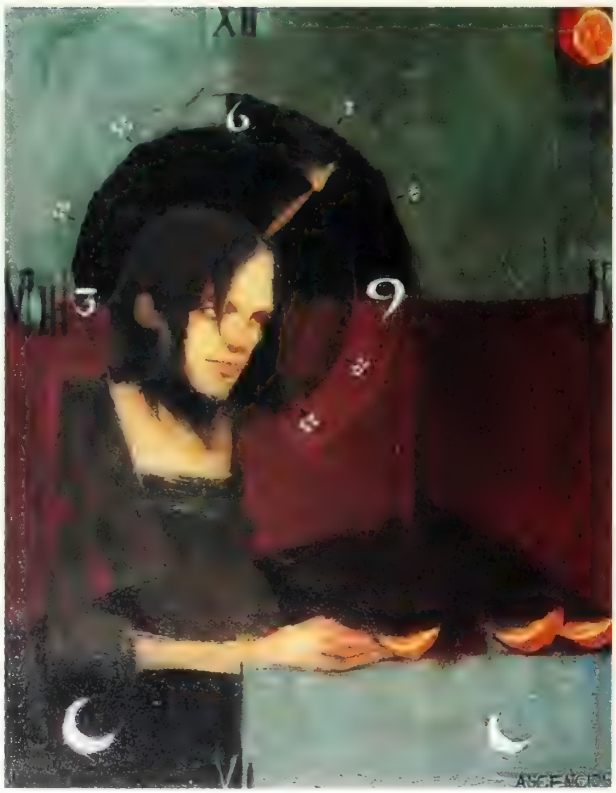
Prego, with supermarket sales of $320 million last year, controls 24.7 percent of the U.S. spaghetti-sauce market, well behind Ragu's 32.8 percent share. But Prego's manufacturers know that it's never too early to start tainting a competitor as inferior. "Coming from school, all these materials carry an extra measure of credibility that gives your message added weight," reads a leaflet from Lifetime Learning Systems, a pioneer of in-class promotion. It helps, of course, that children lack the critical judgment to weigh the accuracy of a sales pitch. But as these young consumers reach adulthood, they will possess all the skills they need to locate Prego on the grocer's shelf.

David Shenk is a fellow at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center in New York and writes the "Ethics, Inc." column for Spy.

MAKE ME

By Steven Rinehart

On the sixth day of her hunger strike Lydia Martinez entered my dreams and immediately died there. She died so convincingly that I awoke and for a few moments could not imagine her alive again. I had to force it. I forced it and then I saw her, behind a Bunsen burner, her pretty face framed inside her black hair and lit by the lapping blue flame. I felt better, much better, but as much as I tried I could not fall asleep again. Lydia was not just any girl; besides being the brightest, she was my One and Only—the one and only student I was allowed to think about in that way I thought about her.



"Do you know what day it is?" I asked Pearl the next morning in the teachers' lounge, over a cigarette. Pearl was my ex-girlfriend—an English teacher. Through an arrangement the two of us shared, she was allowed to think about Gabriel, her One and Only. Gabriel was Lydia's former boyfriend and the reason for the girl's hunger strike.

Steven Rinehart is completing a collection of short stories. He lives in New York City.

Think only, Pearl and I had agreed; that way no one gets hurt. At least that was the way it had started.

Pearl blew smoke out her nostrils. "How could I not know?" she said. "She stage-whispers it to him every day in homeroom: 'I'm on Day Five, Gabriel,' she says. 'Day Six today.' She's got him worried to death."

"He didn't seem particularly worried in Earth Science this morning," I said. "But just for the record, it's Day Seven. Seven days since you drove the boy home."

Pearl blew a mouthful of smoke at the dirty window that overlooked two granite benches donated by the Class of '78. The windows in the teachers' lounge were never cleaned. The janitors refused, the teachers refused. No one else was allowed inside.

Then Pearl looked at me with tears balanced in the corners of her eyes, a device she had always used to great effect. "Chris, I'm just barely making it," she said. "Sometimes I think I'm not going to make it. I know it's not the smart thing to do, but I'm just barely hanging on. A skin-of-the-teeth kind of thing. Do you know what I mean?"

"Oh, Pearl." My voice was more tender than I wanted it to be. "Don't be dramatic. He's just a boy. Think about it."

"That's the trouble—it's all I think about." She laughed, and the laugh dislodged the tears.

"Anyway," she said, "it's not like I expect you to know what I'm talking about." She sniffed out another

Illustration by N. Ascencios

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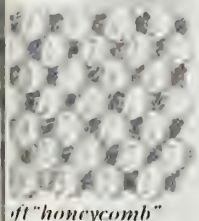
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laugh and then sighed. "I'm really very sorry I said that."

"Forget it," I said

There was a pause, and after a moment I filled it. "If nothing else, consider Lydia."

She snorted. "I don't give two shits about Lydia and her stupid hunger strikes. She'll quit just like the other times. She always eats eventually."

"No," I said, "she never just quits. Gabriel always comes back to her, then she eats. That's not the same as quitting."

"She'll quit this time. I'll bet you anything she's eating by Friday."

I didn't say anything for a moment, then I rubbed my eyes hard. "I'm having trouble sleeping," I said.

"Again?" Pearl mashed the nose of her cigarette in the center of the ashtray. It stayed there, bent and broken, its pink end in the air.

"Why do they humor her?" she said. "They should yank her out of school when she pulls this stuff. It's only for the attention. They should just yank her out for her own good."

Outside the dirty window some stray papers blew across the grass. A girl shrieked and a bad muffler blatted into the distance.

"Who's they?" I said.

I had only kissed Lydia, and I had only done it once. It happened last week on Parents' Night. Lydia's father—of all people—sought me out at the front lab station, where I was explaining the periodic table to a single mom whose child was nowhere to be found. He drew up behind me and out of the corner of my eye I could see him shifting his weight from foot to foot. Lydia hung back in the doorway and watched us, her tiny chin low to her chest. From that distance the pupils of her eyes, lost inside dark irises, seemed enormous.

"What is this about?" he asked when the woman had left. He waved a paper in front of my eyes.

I took the paper from him and read it. It took two passes before I recognized it.

"Advanced lab takes some extra equipment," I said, handing it back. "It's just a deposit. If nothing is broken it's all refunded at the end of the semester."

He examined the paper doubtfully. Lydia turned her face away from the room.

"Just in time for Christmas," I added. By then the vice-principal had noticed the scene developing from his office across the hall, where he was entertaining a man in a business suit. He glanced at Lydia and then frowned at me. The man in the suit spoke to him but the vice-principal continued frowning through the doorway.

"I pay this already," Lydia's father said, staring at the paper. He looked panicked. "Already pay."

The vice-principal circled around the man in the suit to be closer. "Great," I said, taking the sheet. "Thank you."

Lydia's father nodded uncertainly and turned to leave. He was almost at the door and then he stiffened and took Lydia by the arm and pulled her back to me. She was pale. Her black hair fell into her face, as if she were hiding behind it. The vice-principal escaped from the man in the suit and stood right in the doorway next to my poster of the Curies. He stood with his nose slightly in the air, sniffing scandal.

"This," Lydia's father said. "This is my daughter."

I nodded at him. My hands went in and out of my pockets.

"You know her," he said. He was starting to look angry.

"Yes," I said. Madame Curie and the vice-principal stared at me.

"She is paid."

"Yes, of course, Mr. Martinez," I said. "My mistake." When I said his name, Lydia's father nodded at me and let go of her arm. The fabric of her sleeve remained puckered where he had gripped her. He walked out the door and Lydia followed behind, brushing past the vice-principal, who had been collared once again by the businessman. She never looked up.

At half past nine I snapped the locks shut on my briefcase and closed the door to the classroom behind me. Pearl had left long ago, and I walked across the varsity diamond to the teachers' parking lot. When I reached it Lydia was sitting on the trunk of my car with her feet on the bumper. Her hands were pressed between her knees and her hair fell on either side of her face.

"Gabriel went off with her," she said, not looking up. "Why didn't you stop them?"

"It's nothing," I said. "There's nothing to worry about." I was too tired and too disappointed to think about Pearl anymore. She and I had played out our big scene just a few days before. My feelings and faults, so recently exhumed, lingered about me like an unpleasant odor. I put my briefcase down and sat on the trunk next to Lydia. I thought of five or six things to say but instead I leaned over, moved her hair, and kissed her. She didn't raise her head and I almost missed her pretty mouth. I felt the soft, slick tip of her tongue, just for an instant, but for the most part she gave me nothing. I kept my face next to hers for a moment, and then I straightened up.

"It's all so disappointing," she said. She pulled her knees up to her chin.

I felt my face heat up stupidly. "What is?" I said.

"Everything," she said. "Just everything."

"Well, you don't have to worry, I won't do that again."

She finally raised her head, but I couldn't see her eyes in the shadows. She didn't say anything for a moment while she looked at me. Then she turned away. "See what I mean?" she said.

On the way home we stopped for an ice cream. She barely touched her cone; I left her a block from her house with it dripping down around her fist.

That, as far as I knew, was the last time she ate.

On Day Eight in Earth Science Gabriel was napping in the last row when the two AV drones, twin brothers with twin eyeglasses, wheeled in the TV and VCR. Gabriel's head lay sideways on his arms, a mass of soft black curls. As soon as the video started he jerked his head up and wiped the back of

is hand across his lips. It was a lm about cellular mitosis. When ıey showed a rabbit being insemi-ated and then dissected, he leapt ɔ his feet.

"You mean they killed it?" he ried. "What is this, Mr. Bergman, ɔme kind of bunny snuff film?"

"Gabriel," I said. I was always empted to stop there, at just the citation of his name, but he was ne of those people who was af-rmed by his name being spoken loud, just the way others are di-inished. It was like food to him, nd I didn't like seeing him fed in ıy class.

I stopped the film. "Gabriel, the erm is sacrifice, not kill. We've een over this."

"Kill is kill, Mr. Bergman," he id. "Dead is dead."

"This is about life beginning," I id. "I really think that if you'd just t down and watch you'd be inter-sted."

"I don't know," he said doubtful-. "There's the whole eye-for-an-ve thing . . ."

"Sit down, Gabriel."

Gabriel sat down, somehow larger nd more beautiful than before. I arted the film. When the egg final-divided—the chromosomes cleav-ıg and rushing to their opposite ɔles—the class twisted in their ats to look back at him. He was sleep, his head on his arms. The remainder of the film seemed interminable.

"Pearl," I told her that night at er kitchen table, "you're crossing ıe line. I don't know what else to ıy to you. Think of Tess of the Vhatshernames, think of Sister oddamn Carrie."

But it was too late; just then I re-ized that she had already gone ırough with it. She was glowing ıt trying to hide it.

"Wrong sex, to begin with," she id. She fingered her strand of faux earls, her trademark. She didn't re-ize the pearls rode too far up the ape of her neck and emphasized er slightly hunched shoulders and llow coloring. I had told her once ıat she reminded me of Garbo, but ɔt the reason why.

"Let me show you something," she said. "You aren't going to believe this." She crossed her yellow kitchen and brought back a tin canister. Inside was white sugar, polluted with what looked to be tiny brown crumbs.

"He puts sugar on absolutely everything. Toast—covered with butter, covered with sugar. Can you believe it?" She licked her finger and poked it into the canister. She held it up in front of her, coated. "Not a single cavity in his entire head. Teeth of steel." After a moment she wiped the finger on the tablecloth.

"Lydia Martinez fainted in Kaplan's class," I said in a calm voice.

She stood up quickly and ran water over her hands. "I'm not going to feel guilty. It has nothing to do with me." She rubbed her hands on a dishtowel.

"I had a dream she was dead. I mean a nightmare. I haven't slept since."

"You told me this already."

"I called her house. Her parents pretended not to understand English. They put her little brother on, and he called me a whore lover and hung up."

She examined her pearls absently. "They thought you were selling something. Did you say who you were?"

"When she came to, she asked them what day it was. Kaplan told her Tuesday. He didn't know what she meant."

"God, would you listen to yourself," she said. "Why don't you just admit how badly you want to sleep with the girl and get it over with?"

My hand gripped the tablecloth. "Don't make fun of me."

"Jesus," she said. "I didn't say you had to do it. I just said that you should admit it. It would be good for you."

I stood up. The tablecloth was crumpled where I had grasped it. "You're not exactly the expert on what would be good for me, are you?"

Pearl rolled her eyes. "Then why did you come over here? To show me what a tough time you're having?"

"To help you, although now I can't remember why." I picked up her sugar canister and dumped it on the table. "Maybe it was so you could tell me the fascinating sugar anecdote. Got any spiral notebooks to show me? Gym socks to hold under my nose?"

She said something, but I was already moving toward the door. The screen slapped shut behind me, followed quickly by the slam of the interior door.

I drove past Lydia's house on the way home.

By Day Eleven Lydia didn't seem thin as much as translucent. Her skin was mother-of-pearl. Her face was serenity itself: her glance at the wall clock, her gaze at the classroom door, her entire aspect, watching me, serenity. I explained quantum theory to the class the way it had been explained to me. I understood the loathing in their eyes.

After class I locked the door and turned out the lights. The feeble afternoon sunlight that slanted through the window seemed deadened by the looming blackboards. I sat on the edge of a desk and laid my fingers gently on the bones of Lydia's hand.

"Did you understand that?" I asked. "Do I make any sense?"

"No," she said. "It's kind of like Mass, except without God, without any feelings."

I put pressure on her hand. "Lydia, you're losing muscle by now. You're losing calcium. Look at the periodic table. That's not just rocks and metal, that's you."

"Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights."

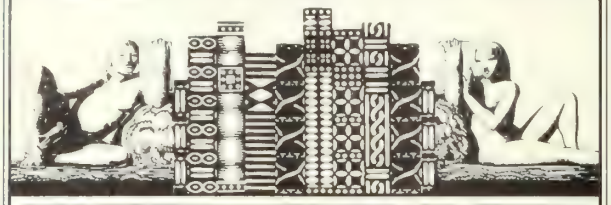
I shook my head. "If he really did that he was just looking to make a big splash." I could feel her tiny Catholic pulse quicken in the back of her hand.

"Have you ever fasted?" she asked.

"No."

"It reminds you that we're all just tubes, you know. In and out. I know that sounds disgusting, but it's funny; when you don't eat, nothing sounds disgusting the way it usually does. Everything seems so clean."

Harper's Magazine



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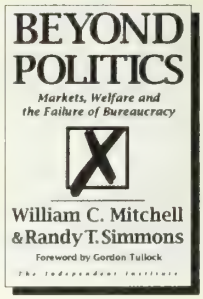
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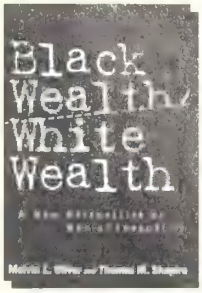
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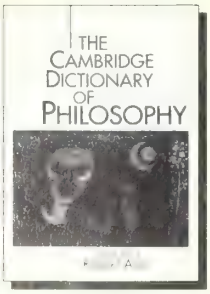
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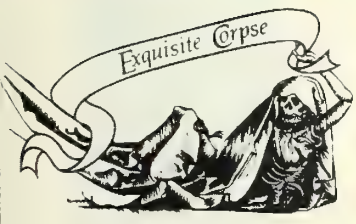
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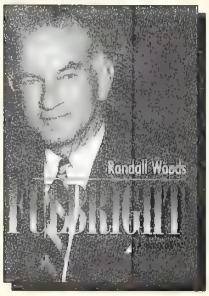


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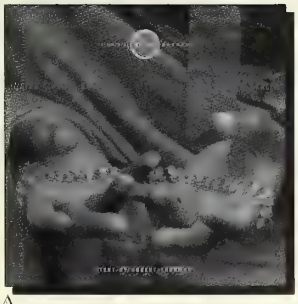


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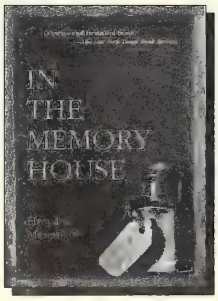
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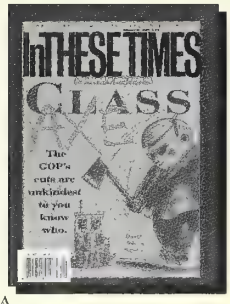
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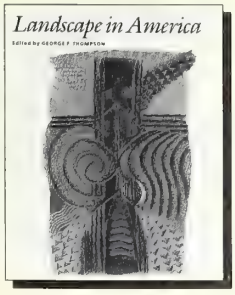
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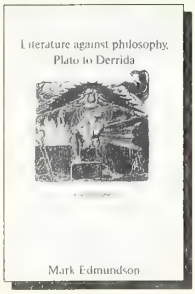
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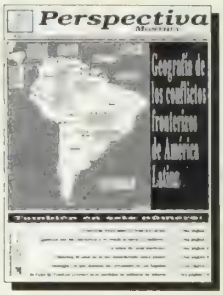
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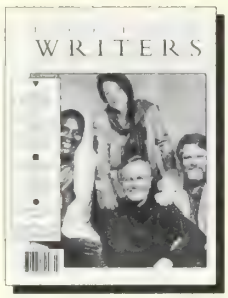
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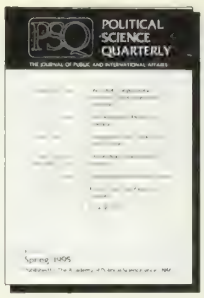
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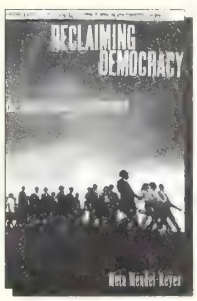
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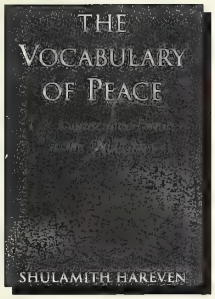


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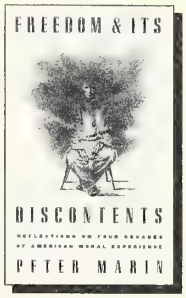


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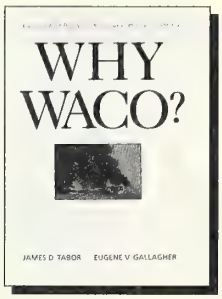
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"It's an illusion," I said. "I can explain the chemistry behind it."

"I know you can, but not now, okay?"

"Okay," I said.

"It's like this," she said. "I lived for Gabriel and now he's gone. Why should I keep going if what I lived for is gone?"

I lifted my hand. "You say that because you like the way it sounds."

"You see?" she said. "I try to tell you but you don't believe me." Then she took my hand back and her grip was strong. "It's not that I want to think about him; I don't want to think about him. I just want someone to think about me." She raised her hand and put the ends of my fingers against her lips. My arm hung heavy and limp between us.

"You know," she whispered, "you could make me want to stop." I could feel the breath from each syllable on my fingertips. "Why don't you just make me?"

"I dreamt that you died," I said. "I haven't slept since. Isn't that enough?"

But it wasn't. She sighed her disappointed sigh and looked at the clock above the door. She stood up, dropping my hand. I stood up to follow her but she was already gone; after all, it was Friday afternoon and the week was over for the likes of me.

That night on the phone Pearl spoke with the kitchen tap running in the background.

"What is this?" I said. "It sounds like you're being gassed."

She laughed too loudly. "What a clever thing to say. You're such a wit."

"He's there, isn't he?" I said. "And you're afraid he'll hear? Where is he, on the couch?"

"No. Guess again."

"I don't have to guess again. He's on the couch, watching television. You're pretending to like it. 'What is this show about?' you ask him. 'Now, who is he, I forget who she is.' You ask him every five seconds if he wants something to drink. You make the mistake of talking during some murder or explosion and he tells you to fuck off why don't you."

The water rushed louder. "You listen to me," she said.

I waited, but all I heard was the water. "I'm listening."

"Be quiet a second." Her hand went over the receiver. When the water noise came back I could hear her breath.

"I have to go," she whispered.

Before I could answer the water stopped. Pearl's voice lightened artificially. "Okay, Chris, I'll see you on Monday. I'll be sure to bring that book."

"*Fuck*," I yelled into the mouthpiece. "*Fuck!*" It was loud enough for him to hear; loud enough if she hadn't covered the earpiece on the way to the cradle.

Earth Science, bonehead science, science for simpletons. Monday, Day Fourteen, and Gabriel sat in the front row. He yawned twice; once for real and once for me. He wasn't wearing socks. He had a seventeen-year-old's silly weekend peach-fuzz beard. He scratched himself. The girl in the next seat watched him with sad but hopeful virginity.

"What I want to know, Mr. Bergman," Gabriel said, "is why animals don't like intercourse. They always scream."

Titters. "Gabriel..."

"Cats act like they're being killed."

"I don't know that that's true."

"It is. It's a nightmare. Sometimes they get stuck together." More titters. "No, seriously, they do."

I tried a stern tone. "We're not talking about reproduction anymore, Gabriel. That was last week. Pay attention."

"I want to review. I didn't get it all the first time."

I sighed and tried levity. "Neither did I, Gabriel, but life goes on."

"Mr. *Bergman*," he said. "Good one."

"Who knows what phloem is?" I asked, over his head.

Gabriel cleared his throat noisily, and the class laughed out loud at this one. But he was through. He was, after all, exhausted.

Fifty minutes later Pearl stood in the teachers' lounge swirling coffee in a stained styrofoam cup. There were no stirrers; there hadn't been for weeks. I usually used a Bic.

"Your young man is practically passed out," I said. "Lydia Martinez—"

She put both hands to her ears. "Stop," she said. "It's not even ten o'clock, Chris. Give me a morning's peace, why don't you?"

"—is in the nurse's office. She fainted in Kaplan's class again. He's beside himself. I heard him on the phone to his wife; I think he was crying."

"He's manic-depressive, for Christ's sake. The man weeps when the cafeteria runs out of Tater Tots."

"What about your job?" I said. "What about your career?"

"God," she said. "If you had any kind of heart."

"We had this conversation, remember? Everyone's not like you two, you know."

Her mouth wrinkled. "Oh, yes, I forgot. The chaste virgin. You wouldn't believe the things Gabriel says he's done with her."

"I'm not interested."

"Then why are you so pale all of a sudden?" She put her coffee down and closed her eyes for a second. "Look, I'm sorry, but you started it."

"I told you I haven't been sleeping. I'm starting to see flashing lights out of the corners of my eyes. Whispering voices. I haven't had that since college."

Her eyes flickered with concern, but just barely. "No sleep for two weeks?"

"I don't have the dreams, at least, but I still can't sleep."

"Is this about me? Chris, I gave you chances. I gave you chances until I couldn't give anymore."

"I don't need chances," I said. "I've got more chances than I can cope with right now."

Just then the vice-principal stepped in through the door. We stared at him. He wrinkled his nose and stepped back out. The vice-principal got his coffee from the ladies in the office. He had either wanted to use the teachers' bathroom or wanted to locate the two of us, establish our whereabouts. The expression on his face fit either scenario.

We waited for fifteen seconds, picked up our briefcases, and left in opposite directions for second period.

The vice-principal had been hired the previous fall. Before he arrived there had been both a vice-principal and a dean of students. Soon afterward they canned the dean of students and gave his duties to the new vice-principal. It was obvious that he considered this some kind of promotion and not a screwing like the rest of us did, so from then on everyone figured him to be either an idiot or a zealous bureaucrat and avoided him altogether. The whole thing ended up making him bitter and suspicious and awfully good at his job.

The vice-principal's office walls were lined with books that he had swiped from the library; they still had the cellophane sleeves with decimal codes typed on white strips across the bottoms of the spines. He kept a football on a wooden stand on his desk; it had a leather satchel handle sewn onto the laces. He had been a coach of some kind at his last school and this was a gift from his players, young men who had apparently adored him. The students at our school were constantly stealing it. When they weren't stealing his football with the handle they were writing his name on the paper bottoms of butter pats along with an obscenity and tossing them up to the ceiling of the cafeteria, where they would stick. Every once in a while, without warning, one dropped, like a dead thing, into someone's food.

"Mr. Bergman," he said, leaning back in his gray vinyl chair. "We have a couple of situations. At least two that I know about."

"Two," I said, nodding. This set off the little flashing lights in the periphery of my vision.

"We have an emotionally unbalanced student on our hands and, I believe, a troubled instructor. A very troubled instructor."

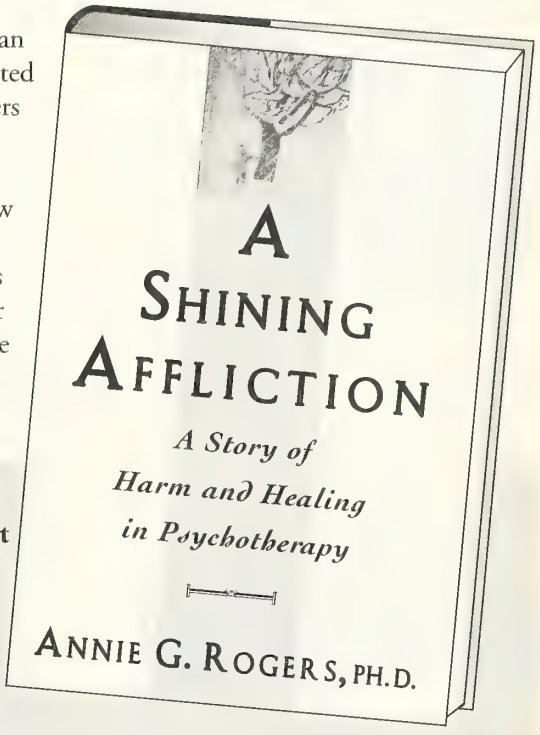
"Teacher," I said.

"I beg your pardon?"

"We have teaching certificates, not instructing certificates. I'm not a lifeguard."

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"Yes, I'm aware that you're not. I wonder if—"

"I'm sorry," I said quickly. "I haven't been sleeping."

"I beg your pardon?" He had leaned forward in his chair.

"I don't sleep. It's as simple as that. Please continue with what you were saying."

"Fine. I thought I should tell you that the Superintendent of Schools has been enquiring about Lydia Martinez." He said that, the bastard: *enquiring*.

"Well, when she dies he'll probably stop enquiring. Not right away, but eventually."

"You're close to her," he said without a beat. "She's in your sixth period." His face showed no hint of accusation, not really.

"And now you want me to shoot myself in the foot. Isn't that a term you people use? Shoot yourself in the foot?"

"Not really," he said calmly. "I want you to get your girlfriend to talk to her, that's all." He picked up his football, not by the handle but by one blunt end, as if he were fondling a breast. The late afternoon sun suddenly appeared through the window behind him, and I had to lean a bit to the side to avoid getting it full in the face. It struck the vice-principal halfway through the back of his head; his face darkened and his right ear glowed red around the edges.

"To think," he said, staring at his football. "We give them films about VD, about HIV, but we don't mention this danger at all."

"What danger?" He was trying to confuse me; I knew it.

"Tragic," he said.

I closed my eyes, the easier to block out the sun. "All right," I said. "What do you want her to say?"

He looked up at me. There was no triumph in his expression. "Frankly, I don't know."

"Then what would satisfy you?"

"Calories," he said. "An orange, a pear. A carrot stick. The goddamn Apple Brown Betty would do, but I don't recommend it." He smiled at his own joke. He was smart, though, I had to give that to him. She would probably listen to Pearl; more than anyone else, she would listen to Pearl.

"Okay," I said. It sounded inadequate, but I was tired from not sleeping.

"Good," he said. "Kaplan will be happier."

"I beg your pardon?"

He flashed an innocent smile. "Our troubled teacher. I have a feeling this will perk him up."

For a second I was stunned. You're priceless, I thought. Still, long after we're gone you'll be here.

I started to get up to leave, but I sat back down. "Before I go," I said, "what danger were you referring to?"

"Oh, I thought it was obvious." He put the football back on its stand. "Mental illness." He tapped his forehead as emphasis.

"She's not mentally ill. She actually has a point if you listen to her."

"I wasn't referring to her. She'll come around. It's all for the attention, I'm sure." He looked at my face and smiled. "Kaplan," he said, "of course."

"Of course," I repeated. I left him there in his little slant of sunlight, behind his football.

"Fuck him," Pearl said, back in the teachers' lounge. "Why should I?"

"It's the right thing to do," I said. "You owe it to her."

"You need help, Chris. You need real help. Haven't you been paying attention to what's going on here?"

"Don't start. This isn't about me."

"No, of course not," she said. "Never about you."

"I told him you'd do it. I think he suspects something with you and Gabriel."

"Jesus," she said. "Did you bother to ask him why he had to involve you, then? Didn't you wonder about that?"

"Look, like it or not he's actually right. All you have to do is talk to her. She'll listen to you."

"God," she said. She closed her eyes and shook her head. "This is something that should be begged."

My heart pounded and the lights flashed. "You're crazy. I'm doing you the favor. I covered for you."

When Pearl opened her eyes she ooked at me calmly. "If I talk to er, I tell her everything," she said.

"Tell her anything," I said. "Tell er I have no heart. Tell her I beat ou. Tell her the truth if you have . Tell her whatever it was you told ourself. Just talk to her. This is me egging."

She sighed and looked out the irty window. "Where and when?" she said. "Let's get it over with."

Pearl sat in the driver's seat. Lydia it in the passenger's. I watched iem from the bleachers of the varty diamond as the sun went down ehind me. When they were done earl drove off and Lydia stood one under the trees by right field. had gotten dark fast and the reetlights were already coming on. he stood for a few moments and ien walked over to me.

"I feel scraped out," she said. Her ance was feathery; she was fighting ard to concentrate. I wondered if ie saw the flashing lights like I did.

"Is she always like that?" she ked.

"Yes," I said. "But maybe not so uch anymore."

She sat for a moment. "She told e to tell you something. I don't ow if I should."

I shook my head. "I want to know hat she told *you*."

"She told me to tell you this st."

"All right. If you want to."

"She said to tell you that she esn't feel sorry for you anymore."

"She's smart," I said. Some white ashes went off and I had to close y eyes for a second.

"Everyone says you two used to in love. Were you in love with r?"

"No," I said. "What else did she y?"

"Is it true I got you in trouble? ou might lose your job?"

I almost laughed. I could have ade that up myself. "Maybe," I id.

"And everything would be okay if ust ate?"

"Yes, it would." I was lying so ickly now, so easily, lying to impress a seventeen-year-old girl. Her martyr, her hero.

"I didn't want to hurt anybody," she said.

"Lydia, I need to know," I said. "Did she say anything else?"

Her lips went tight. "She said that she's never going to give him up."

The flashing lights again. "Anything else?"

"She said I should help you and be with you. That it's important."

My heart sank. Oh, Pearl. Then the streetlight behind me came on, and suddenly Lydia's face was lit and stayed lit, and I could finally see it, the whole of it. Her skin glowed; I wanted to touch it with the back of my fingers. I did.

"Lydia," I said. "You remember what you said to me before, about making you? I could do that. I could just make you."

But then that familiar resigned look crept in, very adult on her seventeen-year-old face, and I was suddenly afraid that I might be too late.

"It sounds all right now," she said, "but what about in a couple of days? You might feel different."

"I won't," I said. "I won't ever feel different."

She looked away, moving her face in front of the street lamp. Blocked now, it scattered its light into the air surrounding her head.

"But *I* might, you see?" she said. She turned back to me. "It's just that I never know how I'll feel after I start eating again," she said. "I might start eating and then it would all seem bad and I'd never want to see you again."

Then for God's sake, don't eat, I wanted to say. I'd rather you disappeared. I'd rather the earth opened and swallowed you whole. I'd rather you were dead.

"What would you do then?" she asked, her eyes suddenly bright and sharp and piercing. She took my hand and squeezed my fingers hard, down near the ends. "What would you do if that happened?"

"What would I do if that happened?" I repeated. I sat for a second. "That's not what's important," I said. "What's most important is that you eat and get better."

She lowered her head, and shadows eclipsed her whole, thin face, as if she had swallowed her disappointment in one gigantic gulp.

"That's what everyone keeps telling me," she said. "And that's exactly why I can't."

She sat there on the bleachers, flashes going off all around her, and I put my arm around her. It hung, limp, off her shoulder. I knew that I wanted to do more than put my arm around her, that I wanted to kiss her right there on the varsity diamond bleachers in front of God and the vice-principal and Madame Curie and everybody, but I didn't right then, I didn't. ■

September Index Sources

1 Joint Chiefs of Staff (Washington); **2,3** U.S. Department of Defense; **4,5** Office of Management and Budget/U.S. Office of Personnel Management; **6** U.S. Census Bureau; **7** National Legal Aid and Defender Association (Washington); **8** Death Penalty Information Center (Washington); **9** U.S. Department of Justice; **10** Embassy of Japan (Washington); **11** Eduardo Pizarro, National University of Colombia (Bogotá); **12** Associated Press (Bogotá); **13** Conseil Electoral Provisoire (Port-au-Prince, Haiti); **14** Dow Jones & Company (N.Y.C.); **15** *Reforma* (Mexico City); **16** Chuck Pillon (May Valley, Wash.); **17** United Network of Organ Sharing (Richmond)/Southwest Organ Bank (Dallas); **18** Helen C. Roundtree, Old Dominion University (Norfolk, Va.); **19** City of Phoenix Planning Department; **20** General Accounting Office; **21** Congressional Budget Office; **22,23** American Council on Education (Washington); **24** Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.)/World Bank (Washington); **25** International Monetary Fund (Washington); **26** Israeli Press Office (Jerusalem); **27** American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (N.Y.C.)/Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City); **28** American Bible Society (N.Y.C.); **29** Karen Gillette, Foothill College (Los Altos, Calif.); **30** Philip Zimbardo, Stanford University (Stanford, Calif.); **31,32** Alan Hirsch, Smell & Taste Research and Treatment Foundation (Chicago); **33** *Gloustershire Echo* (Gloustershire, England); **34** New York City Department of Parks and Recreation; **35** National Geographic Society (Washington); **36** Telecine Inc. (South Barrington, Ill.); **37** Nate's Autographs (Los Angeles); **38** Office of Enforcement, U.S. Treasury Department; **39** Jones, Wyatt & Roberts (Enid, Okla.)

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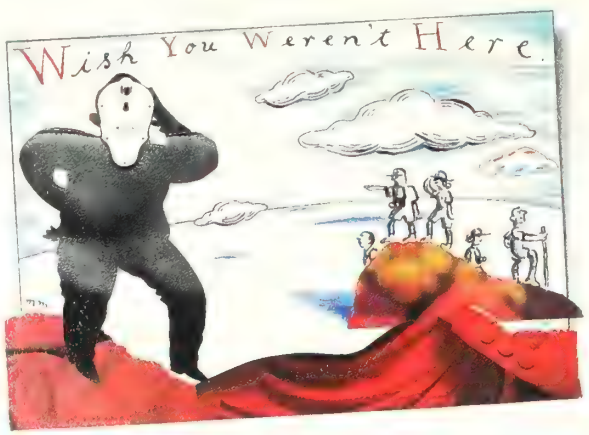
Why most travel writers should stay home

by Sallie Tisdale

Among the books discussed in this essay:
The Happy Isles of Oceania, by Paul Theroux. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 528 pages. $24.95.
Natural Opium: Some Travelers' Tales, by Diane Johnson. Alfred A. Knopf. 256 pages. $21.
Into the Heart of Borneo, by Redmond O'Hanlon. Random House. 204 pages. $16.95.
In Trouble Again: A Journey Between the Orinoco and the Amazon, by Redmond O'Hanlon.Atlantic Monthly Press. 288 pages. $17.95.
Old Glory: An American Voyage, by Jonathan Raban. Simon & Schuster (out of print). 409 pages. $16.95.
Hunting Mister Heartbreak: A Discovery of America, by Jonathan Raban. HarperCollins. 372 pages. $25.
Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars, Paul Fussell, ed. Oxford University Press. 262 pages. $25.
Music in Every Room: Around the World in a Bad Mood, by John Krich. Atlantic Monthly Press. 304 pages. $7.95.

Before I had ever traveled—other than by sitting in the backseat of my father's Chevrolet station wagon—I read travel books. I read with the open heart of a book-loving child, in order to disappear into the story, into the world of another. Travel books were shiny with promise—informing and diverting in equal measure. They were my door to the possible. All through fourth grade, I read about Israel: my teachers had told me it was a "new" country, and the idea of a brand-new country seemed at once real and fantastic.

Years later, when I began to travel myself, I came across a few of the classics of travel literature, marvelous works like Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, her wry 1897 account of unexpected dangers; Evelyn Waugh's precise, slender prose; and Robert Byron's travelogues from the 1930s: *The Road to Oxiana* and *First Russia, Then Tibet*, adventures I read simply for the way the language flowed (in winter the people of Moscow moved "like black ghouls on the soundless snow"). These were writers who traveled because they wanted to travel, who wrote because they needed to tell their stories. They traveled *to* and wrote *from*. Kingsley and Byron became their own subjects only to the extent that what they reported happened to them and not others. Their books—however cranky at times—are flavored with generosity and a good heart, and even now are anodyne to a world of xenophobia and rage. I read them and I think I would very much like to have gone along, too.



The modern reader has the misfortune of living in a time when travel literature is booming and good travel writers are few and far between. The genre places enor-

Sallie Tisdale is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *Her most recent book is* Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex, *published by Doubleday.*

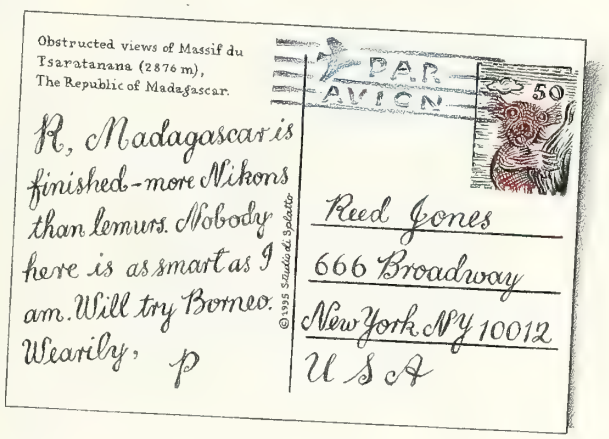
Illustrations by Matthew Mariu

ious importance on the idiosyn-
rasies of the writer; nothing exists
utside of the author's vision, the
uthor's desire, and if that vision
nd desire are marked by a smallness
f spirit, no amount of technical
kill or precarious death-defying will
uffice to make a good book.

During the 1980s and early 1990s,
ontemporary literature embraced
ne travel book as a highbrow form.
Writers like Paul Theroux, Jan Mor-
s, and Tim Cahill became celebrat-
d practitioners of this disconcerting
end. Cahill, the quintes-
entially Everyman travel
riter, produced a series of
reciously named essay col-
ections like *Pecked to Death
y Ducks* and *Jaguars Ripped
ly Flesh*, filled with per-
ous, if repetitive, trips to
ar-flung locales. Jan Morris
pecialized in brief snap-
ots of cities: *Hong Kong,
enice, Oxford*. Morris is
ne Will Rogers of the ur-
an world; she seems never
o meet a city she doesn't
ke. Paul Theroux, on the
ther hand, filed an amaz-
ng number of peripatetic
ispatches from around the
orld, not liking much of anything.

Today, true travel writing—the
rical account of an adventure
arked by curiosity and courage
ather than by showmanship—
arcely exists. When I read Ther-
ux, Cahill, and many other people
riting about their travels, not only
n I glad I wasn't along with them
ut their books make it clear that
ey're glad, too. Modern travel writ-
s have betrayed their mandate. The
riters themselves are the subject
ow, not the places they go, and in
is particular form of navel-gazing,
at means the subject is their own
scontent. They may be gifted styl-
ts, and sometimes gifted thinkers as
ell, but their books feel like exer-
ses in self-importance, in existen-
al dismay. Their success as literary
oducts depends on the inferiority
the places they travel, of other
avelers, of readers themselves.

A particular distinction between
avel and tourism marks modern
avel writing, which sometimes goes to acrobatic lengths to frame it. The self-anointed traveler despairs at the nearness of other visitors, the tiniest evidence of travelers having passed this way before, and is touchy indeed at being mistaken for one of the crowd. What he hates most about tourism is tourists. Paul Fussell, writing as the editor of *The Norton Book of Travel*, says, "Hemingway could perform as a tourist as well as a traveler. . . . Like Hemingway, Truman Capote lived and traveled much overseas as well as touring there . . ." In Fussell's universe, whether one is a tourist or a traveler seems to be not how, or how well, one is behaving at any given time but where and what one is viewing. If Hemingway is in a seedy bar in a back alley, then he is traveling; if he is gazing at the Eiffel Tower, even Hemingway is a tourist.



The line is an awfully fine one, and all travel writers think they know where it is—far from themselves. Fussell suggests that "the closest one could approach an experience of travel in the old sense today would be to drive in an aged automobile with doubtful tires through Roumania or Afghanistan without hotel reservations and to get by on terrible French." The he adds, "One who has hotel reservations and speaks no French is a tourist." In this increasingly technology-driven society, poor organization becomes the last bastion of adventure.

This kind of travel—and travel book—is a little bit sacred and masculine. It despises the masses and loves the unbeaten track, the self-imposed but public exile. This traveler relishes the uncommon and the uncomfortable; he courts trouble. You could almost define modern travel literature as writing that is specifically about disconnection; it's a genre of isolation, marked by hindsight and cool self-possession in the face of disasters, natural and otherwise. Fear—real fear—never bleeds through.

The genre has become—as genres sometimes do—a way of life, a way of seeing the world. The traveler belittles the tourist but almost equally belittles his fellows, whoever and wherever they are. He disdains the stay-at-home yet entertains himself on the hospitality of rooted strangers; he tries to pass as an inconspicuous local yet hates to be ignored. The traveler these days is, in short, an adolescent, eternally torn between being accepted and being something special.

"In Viti Levu, there was no avoiding the tourists," Paul Theroux writes in *The Happy Isles of Oceania*. "I kept hoping for something wilder, more remote, a bit emptier, no golfers. Yes, here and there, in an isolated part of the island was a valley of dark green jungle, but really what sort of jungle was it when you went for a hike and after a few hours ran into an Indian family picnicking?" Theroux clearly considers traveling as he does to be a moral as well as an aesthetic act: "*Tourists don't know where they've been*, I thought. *Travelers don't know where they're going*." He spends half his time in foreign countries trying to escape other foreigners, daintily avoiding their paths. When he kayaks in Australia, he wants to ask a local "how many calm days they had at this time of year, and whether I should wait for the wind to slacken. I knew there had to be flat days, but if I asked him this he would have laughed and mocked me for being a bloody Yank and a tourist."

For travel to "have any value at all" for Theroux, it must be done alone. After leaving Australia, Theroux is camping on a beach on a small island in Tonga when he sees a sailboat with four Americans aboard anchored nearby. The tide is about to strand them on a hidden sandbar. He warns the group, not out of courtesy but because "I did not want to wake up the next morning and see this boat willfully trespassing on my lagoon." I suspect, I certainly hope, that Theroux is being ironic here. But he is so consistently humorless one can't be sure. Theroux never cracks a smile.

Even in Theroux's early books, his travels are filled with the "fat lady" and "the cripple" and "the zombie," with drunks and bigots, stupid people, boring people. He's only gotten more sour the farther he's gone. (He's a walking example of how travel doesn't necessarily broaden you.) In *Happy Isles*, a recent book, Theroux ingratiates himself with an official in the Solomon Islands by denigrating the Japanese—or, as he puts it, "these little people . . . a one-race, one-language, one-family island of desperate overachievers who have a fascist belief in their own racial superiority . . ." The French are "insincere, unprincipled, and unreliable." Later, in the Cook Islands: "Another day in Fatland—fat men, fat women." No wonder Theroux travels alone.

Theroux's rudeness seems constitutional, a part of his personality. Compare Theroux with Eric Newby, one of the best of the old school: describing a seedy *pension* a guide led him to in Istanbul in 1958, Newby simply writes, "I prayed that the hotel would be full but it wasn't." He hardly needs to say more for us to know exactly what he means. Newby's writing, and his rather fantastic adventures, are full of aggrieved bewilderment, but he never blames anyone else for the trouble in which he finds himself. He never comes across as a troglodyte.

To the modern travel writer, rudeness is a mark of seasoning. In her book *Natural Opium: Some Travelers' Tales*, Diane Johnson describes taking a boat to the Great Barrier Reef: "I hated all the other passengers . . . only a youngish couple, Dave and Rita, looked promising, but then I was infuriated to learn that Dave and Rita were Americans—we hadn't come all this way to be cooped up for five days in a prison of an old Coast Guard cutter with other Americans . . ." Of another fellow traveler, she writes, "He was no use. . . . He had no conversation, had never been anywhere, did not even know what we wanted from him. Imagining his life, I thought about how sad it was to be him."

Johnson's attitude is marked by *la nausée*; in even the most remote destinations she practices world-weariness as a way of life. She tries to buy a souvenir in Tanzania but is unhappy with the selection: "One would want nothing to do with the appalling ebony figurines, each uglier than the last, or the pitiful little hairy drums or bark wall plaques or cowbells on strings. It seemed to me that Tanzania needs a crafts advisor." Johnson is equally distressed by modern Japanese women, loud English people, dour Russians, jovial Australians, and—always—other Americans.

"We were traveling from Delhi to Agra," she writes, "on the obligatory visit to the Taj Mahal." But what is the obligation? Simply that it would be "a shame to be in India and not see it, and each [of us] supposed that the aura of the place would, if it wasn't too touristy, speak to us, embody our emotions . . ." Johnson's scorn is so exaggerated and universal that the reader's irritation begins to give way to amusement. Could this be parody? In London, for example, she and her coyly named companion "J." are met by a car and driver. "His car was a red Mercedes stretch, which struck us as not being what we had expected, a little too flashy, portending other surprises, even disappointments. Arabs, perhaps." Johnson longs to be left alone, to be insulated, catered to, free of the hoi polloi. She drops hints—the Concorde, the cognac—to let us know what spheres she travels in. "I am not fond of travel in the best of circumstances," she adds, taking off again. About a fellow passenger she writes, "I fell into conversation with her, breaking my most sacred rule for airplane travel: never talk to the person next to you."

Whatever the method, the poin seems to be to avoid the sensatio most central to being in a foreig land: that of being foreign. As a for eigner one is both conspicuous an invisible; you can't blend in com pletely, and you won't be recognize either. To be a foreigner is to surren der somewhat. It requires a certai kind of trust, a willingness to pla the fool for a while. There's nothin like a trip to cure a swollen head.

Last year, sleeping off jet lag o my first night in a new country, dreamed I was ostracized by every one I knew, turned away even b the Salvation Army. One of th friends traveling with me dreame the same night of a huge party t which he was pointedly not invite "We have no egos," he said. "We ar nothing here."

A few nights later, our little grou stayed in the upstairs rooms of tumbledown mansion that housed popular local restaurant on th ground floor. After dark the lus grounds blossomed with tiny light strung through the bushes and tree The restaurant was full and nois with talk and ragtime piano an lovely people in evening clothes un til, near midnight, the party faded t silence. Some hours later, we wer awakened by yelling, the thud running feet, the slamming of dow stairs doors. A tentative investiga tion led nowhere. The next day w woke to a clear opal sky and a empty house: doors open, lights o silent and still. We ate Triscuits an drank cold tea, and then we packe and left. The night had been a far tasy of insignificance; we were unin vited witnesses to a plot that didn concern us and was neve explained.

Most travel books and essa these days are written on assign ment, by freelance writers perpetua ly hitchhiking on someone else dime, someone else's idea. (This isn new; what seems peculiarly moder is the writer's unwillingness to adm it.) An essay in *Condé Nast Travel* turns into a book that never men tions Condé Nast at all. Such mag

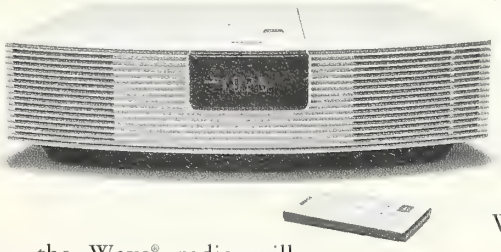
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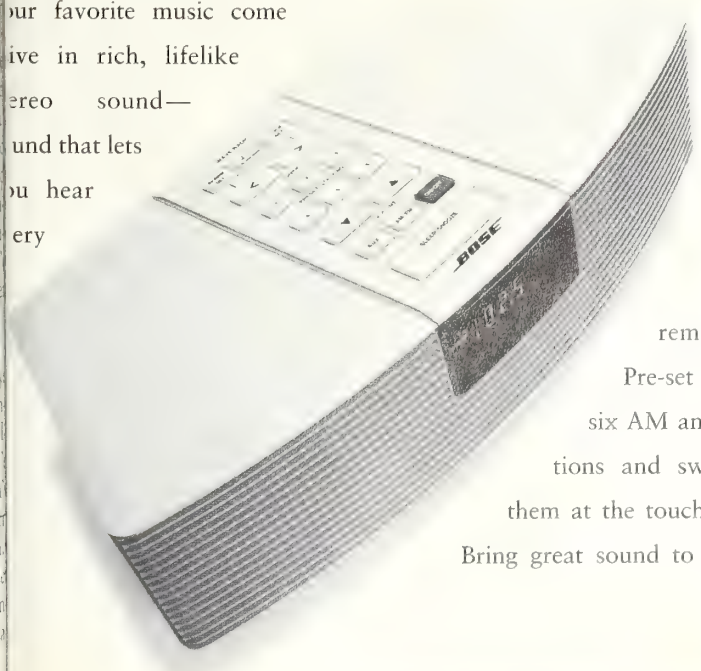
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zines pander to the same class of wealthy traveler that has always roamed from one watering hole to another, but they also seduce the middle class, which only in this century is traveling in large numbers. They serve as flattery for all who wish to separate from the rabble—those other people, those *tourists*.

Of particular note in this regard is what might be called travel adventure: risky trips taken largely to be written about, to create stories where none existed before. If a writer gets sent off to a steamy jungle, something untoward is likely to occur, something that might accurately be described as spontaneous. That's precisely the point. But the writer isn't in the way of that event spontaneously. He has put himself in the way of it, gone looking for it, and the "spontaneous" nature of the experience, like its novelty, is just more material.

Redmond O'Hanlon, the burly, Oxford-educated author of *Into the Heart of Borneo* and *In Trouble Again*, has carved out the same niche of misadventure once favored by Eric Newby. The persona O'Hanlon has adopted is that of the quavering stay-at-home who can't stay home, whose quirky preoccupation dogs his days. I suspect there's a lot of truth to this persona, and he captures neurotic anxiety as well as any travel writer these days. A good portion of his work involves the collision of British gentility with the primitive world, as in the following episode during his infamously horrid trip to the Amazon:

> "Simon!" I said, as we burst through the door of the research station. "We saw a Silky anteater!"
>
> "Did you?" said Simon, looking up from his book, a crate of beer at his elbow. "Then why the hell didn't you grab it by the back legs and drag it back here? There's ants *everywhere*. They're all over the kitchen. It's bloody disgusting. They've been at my spam."
>
> "You must put it in water," said Juan.
>
> "Take a running jump," said Simon.

O'Hanlon can be wonderfully amusing, and he has a lyric gift for describing the natural world. Bu there is a moment where the reade wants to shout, "Go *home*, already! But O'Hanlon doesn't go home. In stead, he cheerfully shares ever nasty comment other people mak about him, every maddening itc and festering bite, every misstep. It clear that O'Hanlon is having a enormously good time being miser able and telling everyone about it His two books together become fre netic memory. It's as though he ha to go a second time because he didn learn his lesson the first trip out.

What is the proper purpose of th traveler? The drive to travel may b born of an engaged curiosity abou the world at large or by a chroni nostalgia for an older, differen world. Some travelers, I'm con vinced, travel not for the risk of nev circumstances but for complete con trol over circumstance; when place, or a relationship, begins t stale, the traveler simply moves on Others enjoy the attentions lavished on foreigners in some countries Still others can't disguise a deep boredom, a lack rather than a surfei of sympathy with the world at large Reading a book, any book, is a lo like sharing a small train compart ment with the author. A little char acter development goes a long way.

Travel narratives suffer an in evitable descent into fiction (al memoir does), which is a problem only to the extent that the write pretends otherwise. Unnaturally de tailed memory cheats the reader o one of the central characteristics o travel: disorder. Theroux, Bruc Chatwin, Jonathan Raban, and man others have a preternatural ability t recall dialogue. Raban's *Old Glory* which recounts a trip to the Ameri can South, is a case in point. The setting is a saloon in Morgan City Louisiana, where Raban eavesdrop on a conversation between two be wildered out-of-towners:

> "What's *happening* here? I don't ge it. I come from Chicago. In Illinois or Missouri, you never see a dead do on the highway. Here in Louisiana Christ, you see more dead dogs than you can shake a stick at. What's hap

pening? People here, they go out of their way to run a dog down. It's a goddamn sport!"

"Yeah, I'm from Tennessee. You don't see none of that there neither."

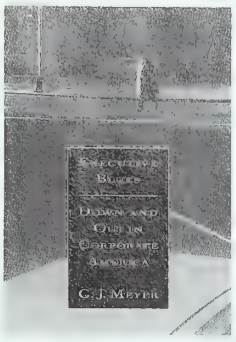
"Hell, when we was kids, we used to break off a car's antenna, make a zip gun out of it. But now it's *senseless*. Here, they take your antenna, no reason. Shoot! That's thirty-nine bucks!"

"But them dogs on the highway . . . Who are these people? People who'll kill a guy's dog just for fun . . . I never seen anything so crazy, not till I came down to Louisiana."

"Me neither."

Clearly, Raban hasn't exactly *remembered* this conversation or any f the numerous long, detailed dia-ogues he recounts. He has recon-ructed it, not out of an interest in is circumstances so much as an in-erest in his own perception of these rcumstances. In *Hunting Mister Heartbreak*, an account of several idely diverse parts of the United tates, Raban packs his narrative ith schematic screenwriter types ossessing cute names: the Air Peo-le, the Scandinavian type, the nan with the gun . . . backing the nabaptist up against the wall." He as characters with names like ainbird and, of course, Mister leartbreak himself, and page after age of complicated conversations nong them all. Sometimes it's not all clear what's going on, except at Raban is telling us exactly what e wants us to know. There are no norchestrated moments. He con-ucts the world he believes himself have been in, and in the process e constructs the self he wishes to ave been while there.

Christopher Isherwood once said at the "ideal travel book should be erhaps a little like a crime story in hich you're in search of some-ing." Part of a search is momen-m, and not knowing where you ight end up. In the best travel oks, the narrator is *looking:* for a erson, a building, a view, a rare rd, a certain truth. For John Krich, hose weird and wonderful book *Music in Every Room* takes him ross Asia and the South Pacific in e company of his girlfriend, Iris, e goal is Iris herself: "Who the ell is she really? And why do I fol-



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SOLUTION TO THE AUGUST PUZZLE

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R	O	O	K	I	E	G	I	S	E	L	L	E
A	U	G	E	A	N	S	T	A	B	L	E	S

NOTES FOR "HARD ACT TO FOLLOW" The unclued lights are HERCULES and his twelve labors: CANNIBAL BIRDS, APPLES, BOAR, GIRDLE, OXEN, MARES, AUGEAN STABLES, ARCADIAN STAG, NEMEAN LION, CRETAN BULL, HYDRA, CERBERUS.
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: 9. two mngs.; 10. O(ma)r; 11. hidden; 12. homonym (bread); 13. two mngs.; 14. (orat)ion; 15. del(r)ay; 17. ri(n)d; 19. *; 22. homonym (ads); 24. homonym (thee); 26. a-(pa)ir; 27. too-h. (rev.); 28. two mngs.; 29. tri-ter; 30. abo*-u.; 32. D(e)NY; 34. pun, rookee; 35. G.I.'s-ell-E. DOWN: 1. *; 2. pun; 3. be-long; 4. rail (rev.); 5. two mngs.; 6. I'm (s)pelled; 7. red*-k; 8. S.(ass)Y; 14. i(d'I-O[rev.])t; 16. pa(rev.)-his; 18. *; 20. burie(d)-ax*; 21. *; 23. de(me-r.)it[rev.]; 25. tree*-as; 29. hidden; 31. *; 33. no-g.

SOLUTION TO AUGUST DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 152). T.(HEODORE) H. WHITE: IN SEARCH OF HISTORY. Marco Polo had written of cities like this when he visited the province of Szechwan almost seven hundred years earlier, and by rolling back the . . . veneer of the twentieth century that overlay Chungking, I might have been . . . in his Cathay.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 153, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the September issue. Winners of the June Double Acrostic (No. 151) are Jenny Loftus, Seattle, Washington; Norton Black, Tucson, Arizona; and Joseph Borini, New York, New York.

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low her to the ends of the planet so I can breathe down her neck? . . . Iris is my journey's first and last destination." Krich is frenetic, cranky, but he's going somewhere—wherever Iris goes. His herky-jerky style, fraught with self-examination, is a perfect antidote for Bruce Chatwin's transparent tales, like *In Patagonia*, those dreams with no morals at all.

Chatwin's writing is filled with the urge to be going, to become the "world-besotted traveler" that Yeats dubbed Jonathan Swift. His books are full of the strangeness of things but not with the strangeness of himself; he's oddly absent even when he's all over the page. Chatwin, who died in 1989, was never a known quantity to me as a reader. His books are distinctly Chatwinesque in both style and voice, but there's never a sense that this is Chatwin's moment, Chatwin's trip, and no one else's. Chatwin's books are, in places, fragmented to the point of inscrutability, and the reader is lost in Chatwin's peculiar, unmapped space. I don't know where he's going, because I don't know who he is or who he hopes to become, or even how he'll know that he has arrived.

Travel writing has burgeoned, I read in various analyses, because travel has burgeoned; we have entered the global service economy, the world of recreation and twenty-four-hour news. The traveler grows ever more desperate for a pure experience, something *authentic*. The lone Western encroacher in a new land writes complainingly of all the signs of Western encroachment, the natives spoiled by Nikes and baseball caps, by tourists. The disposable fertility of mass culture may indeed reduce the number of unmined tribes for the lone voyager to sample, but it also has given the tribes a few new options to choose from. No doubt this is a mixed blessing, but the ease with which the visitor decides what's best for those he visits never ceases to amaze me. We forget that exotica is not merely a relative concept; it is *fundamentally* relative, the very definition of relativeness.

The visitor who longs for China to stay Chinese wants the right to define *Chinese* himself. He wanders the back roads, then writes his book so that everyone will know what matters most: not to be the first to see remote lands but to be the last to see the land remote. He goes alone where no one *he* knows has been, and then comes home to talk about it. It's the new colonialism.

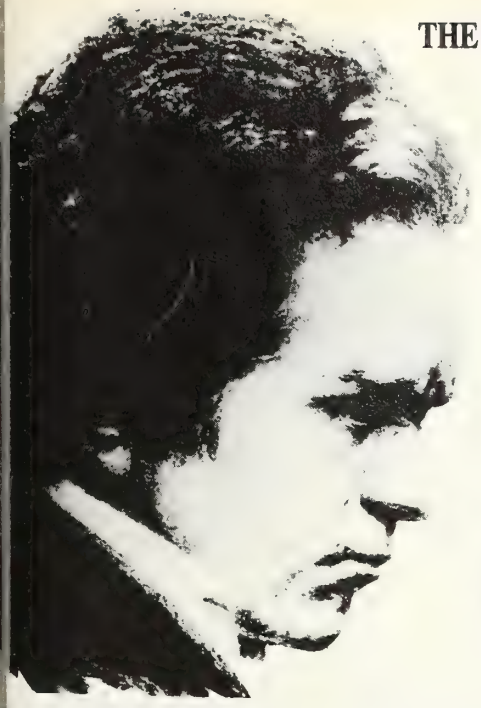
Thus we arrive at the dirty little secret of travel writing. Travelers dissociate themselves from tourists not because tourists are noticed but because they are *not*. The traveler despises the blank-eyed stares of local people in a strange place, the obsequious courtesy of souvenir sellers, the pugnacious silences and weary immobility with which the foreigner is sometimes met. The self-styled traveler insists these are not meant for him. But to the local merchant tourists and tour groups are anonymous and interchangeable; they are small blips across the local landscape. And they are all instantly forgotten. In some important ways, tourists are the least intrusive travelers of all.

This isn't something most travelers will admit, but they know that if you really want to stand out in a strange place, show up late and on foot. Act according to the belief that the locals will want to get to know you as much as you hope to get to know them. The single traveler, the one with the small backpack and the notebook, the one looking for the "real" Java, the "real" Sudan, wants something the tour group does not. He wants to be the center of attention; he yearns to be taken behind the scenes. Knowing he can't "pass" as a local, the traveler (credit card and all) tries to pass as something else—a pilgrim, a nomad, ever on the move, belonging to no one.

Paul Fussell calls tourism "egalitarian," but with that word he detests it. He longs for the days when traveling was the province of the few. "The tourist moves toward the security of pure cliché," he writes in *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, and then, wistfully, "I saw myself lolling at the rail unshaven in a dirty white linen suit as the crummy little ship approached Bora Bora . . ." The result of this pipe

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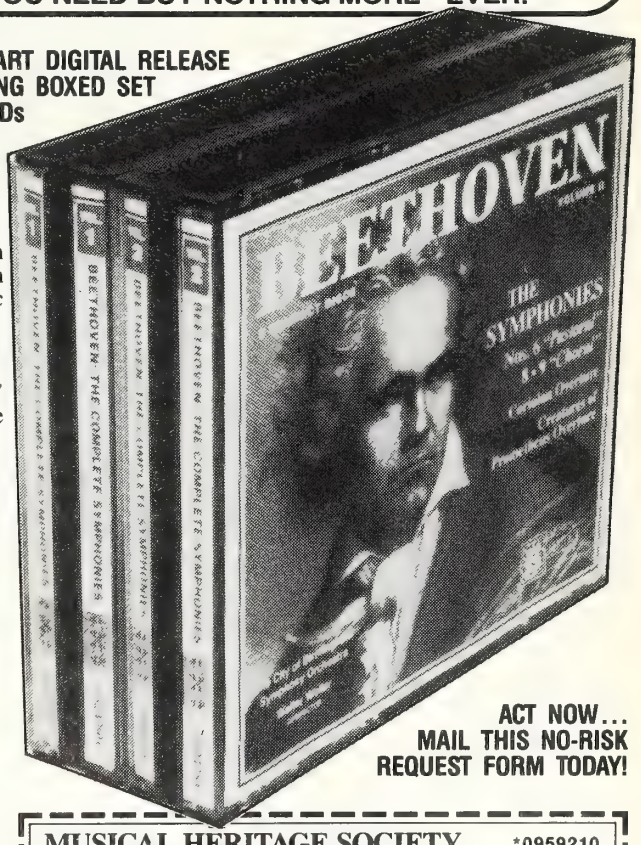
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dreaming is a willingness to dismiss whole countries in a single breath: "Now, Martinique would seem to be about nothing but tourists, like Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Barbados, Bermuda, Hong Kong, Fiji, and the Greek Islands."

To Fussell, tourists are guilty of the unpardonable sin of going to see what is commonly seen—that is, what is commonly desired to be seen, seen by many. Disdain held for tourists frequently translates into a disdain for the places tourists go, which has nothing to do with the intrinsic value of those places. It's like caring more about the neighborhood than the neighbors. "In Florence last summer," wrote Edna O'Brien in *The New York Times Book Review*, "having lined up to see Michelangelo's 'David,' I found hordes had descended with cameras in order to 'capture' David's torso, David's gaze and David's genitals. It struck me as ludicrous, a batch of photos to be shown to others who also have photos of David, Venus or 'Primavera.' Real travelers are few and far between."

O'Brien resists this mob of humanity, a mob she refuses to join except in line. She is there, after all; she isn't going to see "David" any other way. She must stand in line with the Bermuda-clad, and perhaps she protests too much: it's precisely her proximity to the rank and file that satisfies her inflated sense of self.

Now, I've never been to Florence, and it's one of the places in the world I would most like to go. I'd stand in line for hours with half the population of Cleveland to see "David." And who am I to say that I'm better than the population of Cleveland? Part of O'Brien's point is her presumption that she is better able to appreciate "David," and perhaps all of art, than the people with whom she must share the experience. Perhaps a few of the camera toters are lifelong lovers of Michelangelo who have saved their pennies for years in order to take this trip, whose hearts are beating faster because, finally, they've come. My father finally got to the Panama Canal this past summer, after having dreamed of going since World War II. I was struck by his unapologetic enthusiasm, his apparent lack of concern for who might think his cruise-ship vacation silly or inappropriate or just not cool. For someone else, it will be the Eiffel Tower, Yosemite, the Golden Gate Bridge. Tourist sites are touristy because they're worth seeing. The jungles of Borneo, in contrast, are sought by travelers because they're not widely sought. Now the coin may be about to roll. I've just come across a book called *The Best of Borneo Travel*. If people stop hanging around the Sistine Chapel and start going to Borneo instead, then travelers no doubt will disdain the mobs in Borneo. And the Sistine Chapel will again be that rare find described in reluctant anecdotes whispered *sotto voce* across the bar.

For millions, perhaps billions, of people, one guided tour is the hard-earned dream of a lifetime. A lot of people won't get that far. Those exotic locals we go off to see on our adventures are the same unwashed masses we've left behind. They are the immobile, job-ridden, family-bound neighbors who envy us our adventures, who will dutifully look at our photos when we get home.

Michael Palin, host of the acclaimed BBC series *Around the World in 80 Days*, wrote a charming account of his attempt to repeat Phileas Fogg's fictional footsteps. Like most travel writers these days, Palin is essentially taking a dare. Of the Pyramids he writes, "Coaches ferry out an endless stream of human insects, deposit them at a tightly packed vantage point where they are assailed by camel-mongers, postcard salesmen, purveyors of trinkets and all the other free market forces which have ripped off tourists at this very spot for hundreds, if not thousands, of years." He captures both the wish not to be a tourist and the reason for being one—how else does one see the Pyramids? Perhaps with enough money and a little clout one can sneak in a visit some other way. I wonder if one hasn't then missed an essential part of the Pyramids, an unforgettable and unrepeatable part of the local culture. The lone traveler longs to be noticed and remembered but tries not to notice that how a culture responds to strangers, and to strangers' money, is an essential cultural marker. If you travel in order to know the local ways, why skip this one?

In 1955, Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote a memoir, *Tristes Tropiques*, in which he predicted that the societies of the world would evolve toward a dreary, undifferentiated monoculture. "The same dish will be served to us every day," he wrote. "What travel has now to show is the filth, *our* filth, that we have thrown in the face of humanity."

Paul Fussell may have called 1918 to 1939 "the final age of travel," but Lévi-Strauss had an advantage over Fussell: he knew that throughout history people have longed for the unspoiled past, to see the world when it was more real, more true. To Lévi-Strauss, travel writers express the puberty of Western culture; they set off on deliberately painful vision quests, for which they are granted tribal status. All is ritual, all is symbolic. My chagrin at discovering that Lévi-Strauss had these ideas before I did isn't much different from the chagrin of the explorer who discovers a flag on his virgin peak. We love the delusion that we alone among our peers, might be first or best.

As I was buying tepid tea in a London shop last year, the Indian shopkeeper held up his hand and said, "Don't tell me, let me guess. You're German?" And I realized how silly I'd been, checking my map in the bathroom so I wouldn't look like a tourist. To the shopkeeper, I was simply foreign. It didn't bother him, and I wondered why it bothered me. All the modern travel books I'd been reading were starting to get to me. I was beginning to think there was something wrong with my simple enjoyment of London's labyrinthine roads—to think that I should hide the fact that I was from out of town. But what's the point of going somewhere different to pretend to be someone different? Travel should be a mirror; and when I look in the mirror I see a blood Yank with a poor command of languages, map unfolded on the street corner, lost again.

.ETTERS

ontinued from page 3

ow unfair it is for so few to have so
nuch, the poor too often are dis-
acted by petty concerns about how
ney are perceived by the very
naves" who made (and keep) them
oor to begin with.

My solution? Move behind the
ates and hire my own garbage col-
ctor as soon as financially possible.
nd I suggest that Lind do the same.

ary Rutz
dmonton, Alberta

I quote from Michael Lind's arti-
le: "Not all nonprofessional jobs
an be expatriated to Mexico or
lalaysia, and a great many low-
illed services—from truck driving
nursing and sales and restaurant
ork—still must be performed in
merica." On behalf of all profes-
onal registered nurses, I would like
ask Lind to become better in-
rmed about nurses. Nonprofession-
l? Low-skilled? Lind may consider
imself part of the "overclass," but it
unds to me like he was raised in a
arn. Nurses are responsible for not-
ng changes in their patients that
ould mean the difference between
fe or death. How can this be com-
ared with hauling freight in an 18-
heeler or selling the latest fashions
t the mall? Perhaps Lind should
nagine himself being rolled into an
nergency room—he looks up from
ne stretcher to see a truck driver
aiting to take care of him. I'll tell
ou what, Lind: Let's change places.
ll write the articles and play arm-
nair quarterback on the state of the
ation, and you come to the E.R.
nd work on an accident victim—no
ulse, no respiration, multiple in-
uries, exsanguinating . . . I'll match
ny skills against yours any day.

iana Arand, R.N.
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ead with great interest Abigail
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Israel's Peace with the PLO

Can the leopard change his spots...the wolf become a lamb?

Two years ago, the world was electrified by "the handshake" and the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO. The Israelis promised the PLO control initially over Gaza and Jericho, with autonomy over all of the "West Bank" and "final status" discussions on Jerusalem to follow. With two years of experience behind us, one wonders where this is going to lead.

What are the facts?

The PLO and Yassir Arafat. The aim is and has always been the notorious "phased plan": to eliminate Israel in two stages—first by creating a Palestinian state in any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment an allied Arab assault against the truncated and critically vulnerable Jewish state.

Since the signing of the Oslo agreement two years ago, Arafat has not fulfilled the promises that he has made and the assurances that he has given. Terror has increased; more Israelis have been murdered and maimed by the palestinians than in any previous comparable period. Until the "handshake"Arafat was officially declared a terrorist by the United States government and was not allowed entry into our country. He is personally responsible for hundreds of assassinations and terrorist attacks. The fact that such a man could appear on the White House lawn, that he could shake hands with the President of the United States, and that he could be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace is truly astonishing.

A mortal danger to Israel. Turning over control of the Gaza strip and any part of the "West Bank" to the Arabs puts Israel in mortal peril. The basic conflict is not between Israel and the "Palestinians", with whom some accommodation, some arrangement of autonomy, could certainly be reached. The basic conflict is with the Arab nations, most of which, with the sole exception of Egypt and Jordan, are still in a state of war with Israel. They are armed to the teeth, not just with "conventional" weapons, but with missiles that even today can reach any part of Israel, and with weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological and nuclear.

With the "West Bank" in Arab hands, missiles won't be needed. Mortars and shoulder-held Stingers would suffice to threaten every commercial flight into and out of Israel, to impede the take-off of military airplanes and to threaten and rain destruction on the principal cities of Israel and its most important industrial, commercial and military installations. Sure, the world would insist that the new Palestinian state be demilitarized. But does anybody really believe that with Israel surrounded by mortal enemies, they would allow such a military vacuum to exist for any length of time—even in the unlikely case that the Palestinians would so desire? If it yielded the "West Bank", Israel would be only nine miles wide at its narrow waist—it would take no major military effort to slice it in half and to destroy it. No country should expose itself to such peril. But with the Judean hills in enemy hands, and without the elaborate warning system on those hills, Israel is totally indefensible and at the mercy of its enemies. That is the opinion of 100 U.S. generals and admirals who so reported to the President and to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

> "If it yielded the "West Bank", Israel would be only nine miles wide at its narrow waist—it would take no major military effort to slice it in half and to destroy it. No country should expose itself to such peril".

We all want peace and, surely, besieged Israel, which has been under constant attack since the day of its creation, wants peace more than anybody. And it is likely that such fervent wish for peace has led Israel into making fateful concessions to Yassir Arafat and the PLO. It will be almost impossible to reverse what has been done. The process of empowering the Palestinians will almost certainly result in a Palestinian state. Will it, as we are told, be "democratic" and peaceful? Not likely! Every one of the 22 Arab states is totalitarian, ruled autocratically, and ruthlessly abusive of human rights. Another Lebanon, carved on Israel's back, with never-ending strife and bloodshed is much more likely—a source of constant terrorist attacks against Israel and ultimately the source of a new Mid-East war. In such a war, Israel's ability to defend itself and to prevail would be in serious question.

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for Hire," June]. It should be easy for me to sympathize with her. I, too, had to take lots of jobs that I was not proud of while trying to establish an academic career: I delivered pizzas, sold my own plasma, and worked in journalism. But I had a clear goal in mind—to become a college teacher—and held these jobs only until I was able to secure a teaching position. Witherspoon simply seems to be marking time and feeling sorry for herself. Without goals—great writer or not—she doesn't deserve my sympathy.

As for the ethics involved, there *are* some players in Witherspoon's little drama who truly prompt scorn. I don't mean the students—they are victims of an environment where superficiality is too highly valued. And I don't mean Witherspoon and her employers—where there is a market for flesh of any kind, there will be "call girls" and pimps to exploit that market. No, the real villains here are the teachers.

Too many so-called professional educators give writing assignments that beg for plagiarism. They recycle the same assignments year after year; they give no guidance as to how the assignments are to be completed; they give the students zero feedback while their work is in progress; and they emphasize grammar, punctuation, and the regurgitation of the professor's point of view at the expense of original thought. *These* are the people who engender meaningless and superficial student writing and thereby keep business brisk at the plagiarism factories.

John Sheirer
South Hadley, Mass.

How do student "johns" learn that cheating works? Simply by observing institutional cultures. Let us imagine that Abigail Witherspoon lands a job teaching composition at a university in the United States. She spends her days (and nights) grading papers rather than writing them, and—assuming she has enough energy left over to keep track of her time—she discovers that she is earning as little as a dollar an hour. This is not ethical, but it is perfectly legal.

Maybe Witherspoon would feel better being exploited as a migrant in the groves of academe than thinking of herself as a prostitute in the general academic marketplace. Maybe not. But in neither case is she the one who is most dishonest.

Sidney Barrington
Elkhart, Ind.

As a college professor, I find it frustrating to deal with the increasing volume of recycled, plagiarized, or purchased papers, and I therefore appreciated your glimpse behind the scenes. But imagine my dismay when I turned to your Classified section and read, "Term-paper assistance: 19,278 papers available!" Perhaps I should hire Abigail Witherspoon to determine whether "ironic" or "reprehensible" is the more appropriate description of your publication.

Stephen Sweet
West Stockholm, N.Y.

Since Abigail Witherspoon is devoting her life to research and writing, I would urge her to get a Ph.D. if she does not already have one. The advanced degree will do nothing for her job prospects, but she will have the satisfaction of knowing that she is in the "overclass" as defined by Michael Lind.

William A. Baker
Bloomfield, N.J.

Tonto No More

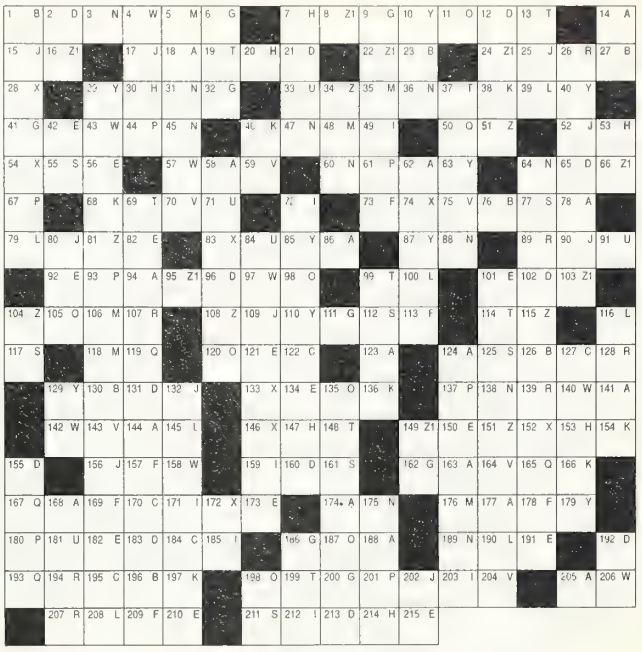
Regarding your excerpt from the comic book series "The Lone Ranger and Tonto" [Readings, July]: I've been wondering since high school when Tonto was going to wise up. *Tonto,* after all, is the Spanish word for "stupid." And as most people living in the Southwest back then had at least a passing familiarity with Spanish, the chances that neither the Masked Man nor "his Indian" knew the word's true meaning are slim. And is it mere coincidence that Tonto's nickname for the Lone Ranger, "Kemosabe," recalls *qui me sabe,* which means "he who knows me"?

James T. Pendergrast
New York City

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 153

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 71.



CLUES

WORDS

A. "____ flesh, and dwelt among us" (5 wds.; John 1:14)
144 58 78 124 168 18 205
94 163 86 174 14 141
62 123 188 177

B. Criticize, focusing on minor details
27 126 196 23 130 1 76

C. Ape, mad, wacko
127 170 195 184 122

D. Momentous, of great significance
155 213 12 183 65 192 160 102
131 2 21 96

E. "____ and all the stars in the sky are for religion's sake" (3 wds.; Whitman, "Starting from Paumanok")
173 215 56 101 134 182 42 210
191 121 150 92 82

F. Composite plant with fernlike leaves and clusters of whitish flowers
113 157 209 178 169 73

G. A British version of "taps" (2 wds.)
32 186 9 111 41 200 6 162

H. Ancient Athenian youth just entering training for citizenship
20 7 53 30 153 147 214

I. According to Hoyle
212 72 171 203 159 49 185

J. Offstage (3 wds.)
25 109 52 90 132 156 80 15
202 17

K. Capricious, frivolous
46 154 38 68 166 136 197

L. Apostle originally called Levi
116 39 145 100 190 208 79

M. Proscribe, ban
35 5 118 48 106 176

N. Memorable 1939 role for Clark Gable (2 wds.)
3 138 175 64 60 45 47 189
31 88 36

O. Most spruce or trim
187 11 135 198 105 120 98

P. Panama or Suez, e.g.
61 180 137 93 44 201 67

Q. "If she be ____ to me,/What care I how fair she be?" (2 wds.; Wither, "Fair Virtue, Sonnet 4")
193 119 167 165 50

R. Seaport on the Clyde, SW Scotland
26 107 139 89 128 194 207

S. One with refined sensitivity to art
161 55 112 125 77 211 117

T. Interest paid to, e.g., a bookie
19 69 37 114 148 99 13 199

U. Extinct volcano on the Kenya-Uganda boundary
91 71 33 84 181

V. Somewhat, to an extent
75 164 204 143 59 70

W. Lambastes, reams, gives what-for (2 wds.)
4 97 206 142 158 57 43 140

X. Project, send forth; something projected
74 152 133 28 172 54 146 83

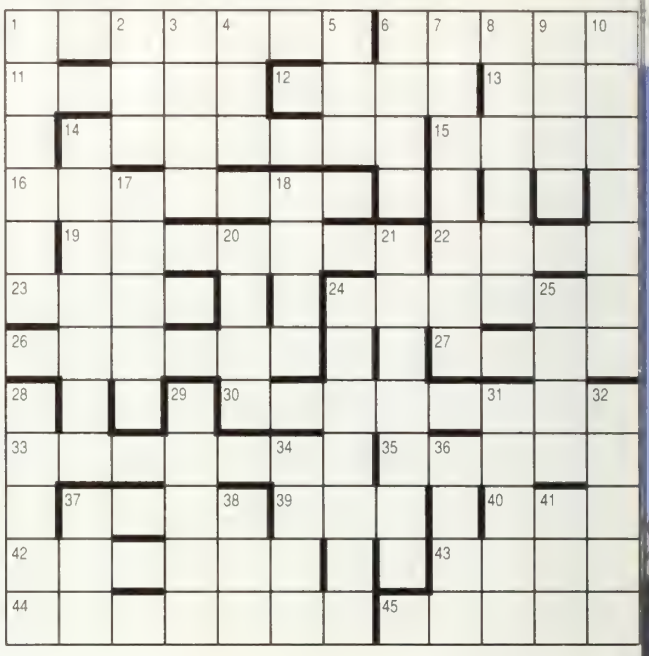
Y. Most sweet, soft, rich, etc.
87 179 129 85 110 29 63 40
10

Z. Tries
34 115 51 151 104 81 108

Z1. "Luxurious lobster-nights, farewell,/For sober, ____ days" (Pope, "A Farewell to London")
24 149 95 16 66 8 22 103

No Entry

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli



This month's instructions:

None of the clue answers is to be entered in the diagram.

Among the clue answers and entries are four proper names. 25 Down is uncommon. 28 Down probably deserves an apology.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 71.

ACROSS

1. Dole, half of poor eliminated, is a star on the move (6)
6. Quote: "Half-penny purchases it" (4)
11. Change has proved Adenauer right (5)
12. Yale following row their tails off for Queens (5)
13. This man gets one right, this man gets what's left (4)
14. Somewhat unsure, see dedication broadcast a second time? (8)
15. Head of the British style has King deposed (3)
16. Wood the actress is lost in, at *Alien* (7)
19. Start off banging a door or beating it (7)
22. Clap hands on seeing egghead during Mass (5)
23. Niger flows into this, as a rule (5)
24. Ribald letters sent around during wedding (6)
26. Disturbed girl due for change in the Netherlands (7)
27. Drawn, I'm depicted with warts and all, so they say (5)
30. Strip of water could reveal either artist traits (6)
33. Wreathe flowers into symbol of changeability (7)
35. 13 Across takes time for them (5)
37. Plant eaten in England live moves to the forefront (4)
39. Act (yucch!) for money (5)
40. Number One (this is not a hint) (4)
42. Sounds like it's absorbed in wound (7)
43. Talking horse with a sex change was a failure! (6)
44. If confused, a chest's what you put in your drawers (7)
45. A chewing sound? In size, it's born where I was (6)

DOWN

1. Servant—or where he works (5)
2. Amount consistent in height and weight (5)
3. Took a different course and kept people in stitches (6)
4. Where Yeats wrote "Before I Entered" (4)
5. Fight that ends tomorrow (3)
6. Seeing there's no time, expressed relief (6)
7. Shard of relic Italians bring out (6)
8. Having swingers around, segregated the rear end only (5)
9. Emphatic quiet engulfs soldier returning from drug trips (5)
10. Bank on bank (5)
14. Using dirty words around me, I'm creepy (5)
17. Stories needing least improvement (5)
18. Music-maker's lyric is like this? (4)
20. Stock market orders public transport to include men's club (4)
21. *Utensil*—a family movie? (6)
24. Grand Canyon Transportation Bureaus sound you out in a new way! (6)
25. California city has one before the end of *Inner Sanctum* (4)
28. A possessive shout from a teenager gets us right in the stomach (5)
29. Five lines of *Music Man* (5)
31. Brown-haired girl, in song from interminable Hebrew musical (7)
32. Teens unwrapped present, for example (5)
34. Ted's alternative got out of bed, died (5)
36. Reversing male greetings, he has this objective (3)
37. You can get a laugh with Bible; conversely you can get a grumpy response (3)
38. Kind of shirt and athletic supporter? (3)
41. In woods you, at first, got three directions (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "No Entry," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by September 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle, "Eleventh Commandment," are Amy Pearson, Los Alamos, New Mexico; Virginia Bell, Sudbury, Massachusetts; and Marcy Telles, San Rafael, California.

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HARPER'S MAGAZINE/OCTOBER 1995 $3.50



ON THE WINGS OF COMMERCE
Penguins and Lipstick, Strawberries and Gold—Aloft
By Barry Lopez

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THE BULL MARKET IN FEAR
Stock Speculation Becomes the Rule of Prudence
By Ted C. Fishman

LEAVING THE FOLK
The Journey out of a Cleveland Childhood
By Phillip Richards

THE CHROMIUM HOOK
A story by Ron Carlson

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HARPER'S
MAGAZINE

FOUNDED IN 1850 / VOL. 291, NO. 1745
OCTOBER 1995

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LETTERS

White-Collar Blues

G. J. Meyer's account of trying to find work in the labor-unfriendly corporate marketplace ["Dancing with Headhunters," Folio, July] really hit home—what's left of home, that is.

I was making a paltry $46,000 a year at an advertising agency when the creative director called me in on the morning after New Year's Day, 1992, and told me to be gone that day. I was cut loose without a dime of severance pay, and in the bitter blasts of breath I exhaled while standing two blocks away from the entrance of the unemployment office the next frozen morning, three abreast with others in my circumstance, I cursed Dunlap, Schulze and Associates to the high heavens.

It's more than three years later, and I'm making nearly $20,000 a year less than I was then, working at a large company whose management manual insists that long-distance phone calls made on the company credit card be paid for by the widow in the event of an employee's death. Occasionally, the company circulates P.R. stories celebrating the fact that the net worth of the CEO of the company has once again topped $2 billion.

I'm down to my last one hundred dollars. My credit card debt (I relied heavily on plastic in order to put food on the table, gas in the car, and résumé paper in the envelopes over the past three years) has soared to tens of thousands of dollars, and I'm hard on the heels of forty.

When I think of my daughter who is now ten years old and has started wanting things like Rollerblades and Nintendo, I find myself staring fish-eyed at the ceiling in our small apartment, wonderin what in the world is going to happen to us.

Name Withheld
Chicago

As I read G. J. Meyer's "Dancin with Headhunters," I was struck b two frequently forgotten truth about workers' relationships wit their employers:

1) One's relationship with an em ployer is not and never will be ana ogous to one's relationship wit spouse, family, or friends, despit the benefit packages and the comp ny picnics. The worker—even on called vice president—who forge that fact risks the sort of disillusio ment and pain suffered by Meyer.

2) The size of one's severanc check does not necessarily corr spond to the size of one's contrib tion to the firm. In the typical lar corporation, some low-level emplo ees contribute far more than ma of the top-level executives, but r care package is going to follow *the* into exile. As it is written in Ecc siastes, "The race is not to the swi nor the battle to the strong, neith yet bread to the wise, nor yet rich to men of understanding, nor y favour to men of skill. . . ."

Donald Singleton
Jersey City

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

It is unfortunate that G. J. Meyer
ıd so many negative experiences
ith potential employers, outplace-
ent counselors, and executive re-
uiters during his nerve-racking
arch for work. Despite our well-in-
ntioned efforts to respect a candi-
ıte's rights, I'm afraid that we fail
:casionally to do so. Meyer's saga
ıs inspired us to develop new pro-
:dures to assure prompt and
raightforward communication
ith our clients. Thanks for the
ake-up call!

even A. Seiden
:iden Krieger Associates, Inc.
ew York City

The last we heard from G. J. Mey-
, he was heading for economic,
ental, and spiritual collapse. If he
ants his book to have a happy end-
g, he'd better start listening to
at teacher no one likes—pain.
:sson one:

1) *It's no big deal whom you've*
orked for. Your character and your
:alth are big deals. So are your
fe, family, and friends. It's a big
al if you have a nice day.

2) *Cut out the pretense and the*
anipulation. When those nice
ople at Fertilizer Solutions Asso-
ation tried to reach out to you
ith their hearts, you wouldn't
ach back. That crazy woman at
oneer was asking you to be hon-
t, to be human, but you kept the
etense going. Gotta manipulate.
otta control. Automatic F.

3) *Quit feeling sorry for yourself.*
ake a list of all the things you
ıve to be grateful about. Keep
ding to it. Think about that.

4) *Don't sneer at truck drivers or oth-*
non-management workers. You were
ıe once, and you enjoyed it. You
ay end up enjoying it again.

5) *Focusing on the past won't get you*
ywhere. The past is a done deal.

6) *Don't take yourself so seriously.*
etend you're in a Woody Allen
ovie.

7) *Examine your perspectives.*
aybe instead of going down you
e really going up.

8) *You need friends and allies to*
at pride, resentment, and fear. You
n't do it alone.

Meyer's teacher spent several years with me, and frankly I didn't much care for her. But I learned my lesson, and I hope Meyer learns his as well—before it's too late.

Joseph C. Dawson
Springfield, Va.

I learned that I was no longer employed when I tried to log onto my former employer's computer network and was denied access; the password had been changed, and no one had taught me the new one. Only after being thus humbled was I officially told that my position had been eliminated.

My initial reaction was one of intense shame. I could not bear to face the people in my former department, people the firm still considered employable. To make matters worse, I lived within walking distance of the office, and the firm's building was a prominent part of the view from my living room window.

Like Meyer, I answered ad after

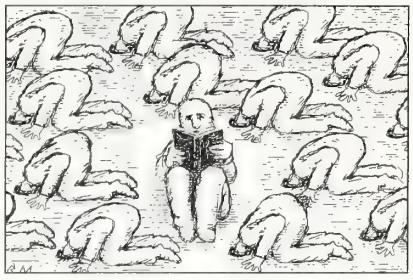
A book about the "Death Industry" few will wish to read.

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New York Editorial Group

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"The point is not to make you squirm, but to make you think about organ donation and perhaps think twice about how we treat the remains of our loved ones when they die ...*so interesting!*"
Sharyl Atkinson, CBS "Up to the Minute"

Death, and what happens to our bodies after we die, is something that no one wants to think about, let alone read about. But this bias, or mind-set, has deterred many caring, well meaning people from donating their own (or a relative's) organs after death...unwittingly causing thousands of potential recipients to suffer and die as well.



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ed, visited headhunter after headhunter, humbled myself at one ridiculously macabre interview after another, all for nothing. I contemplated living in a cardboard box in front of my old boss's house—would she have pity on me and take me in? I thought of committing suicide in a manner calculated to instill guilt in my former co-workers.

Recovery? What recovery? as Meyer so aptly asks. The real question is this: What has gone so horribly wrong with this world that a person is nothing more than scum unless he has a job and can be treated like scum all the same if he does?

Name Withheld
Pittsburgh

G. J. Meyer's complaint falls on deaf ears at this address. Forty years' experience in paper-mill management has made me quite indifferent to the continued existence of human-resources and public-relations people. An English degree plus a few years in P.R. work builds no machinery, and those comfortable hives in which he was ensconced contain far too many drones.

H. B. Porter
Kennewick, Wash.

G. J. Meyer's "scenes from the downsized life" made me recall my own dismal five-year career as a headhunter, dealing with whiny hypocrites like him. If I had a nickel for every newly humble candidate who swore that he always returned calls and helped out-of-work job seekers, I'd retire right now. If I had a nickel for every guy who actually did these things, even after a painful layoff, I'd have . . . maybe a nickel. Not even the outplacement people, who endlessly urge their depressed clients to cold-call strangers, will return phone calls. This is the corporate culture we have built—"we" meaning slick, self-aggrandizing captain-of-industry types like Meyer—and occasionally it bites us on the ass.

So what should this poor mope do? He should embrace all that Republican "opportunity society" stuff he's no doubt been spouting for years. He should go to school, learn to type, take a phone sales job, volunteer at something—anything to get himself out of the house. His contempt for actual work shows through when he grabs at the stock, manipulative, self-pitying image of himself at McDonald's, wearing "a paper hat." All these characters sing this exact same tune.

After my headhunting business went south a couple of years ago, I did all of the above. I hustled, stopped bullshitting myself, and eventually did okay. But I see zero change in this guy, just a more refined bitterness.

Keith Martin
New York City

I can't help thinking that "Dancing with Headhunters" could not have been written by a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, or anyone floundering on a lower level in the workplace than the one G. J. Meyer misses so much. We "brutes" couldn't have pulled it off because we experience this sort of thing far too often to think of it as anything out of the ordinary. Layoffs, jobs finished, the caprice of a foreman or a superintendent shutting us out for God knows how long—we expect it. It's built into the apparatus. And were one of us to complain as loudly as Meyer does, he would be laughed out of town altogether.

I do have sympathy for Meyer. Who wouldn't? But my sympathy has its limits. Unlike the vast majority of us, Meyer at least has the chance to make a good living as a writer and, like Voltaire's Pangloss, to tend his own garden.

Fred Thornton
Shelton, Wash.

G. J. Meyer is worried about what the neighbors think. He is upset because he is no longer pulling down a six-figure salary, attending power lunches, or taking exotic vacations. He is obsessed with the shriveling of his golden parachute. He should lighten up. Nowhere does he display an adventurous spirit or a sense of humor about his predicament. Perhaps this is why he failed to enjoy the jobs he held.

I am a sociologist in my mid-thirties, and I became unemployed over a year ago. My savings and unemployment compensation have dwindled. Yet I awaken each day filled with zeal, thankful that I'm not stuck working as a memo shuffler in some stultifying corporate bureaucracy. I now have the privilege of attending Mass early each morning. It gets me out of bed, gives me a daily dose of spiritual enrichment, and it has spawned new friendships. I have read dozens of those books that I've been meaning to read for years. I went to California and tried out for *Jeopardy!* I explored the city inside and out, found meaningful volunteer work, tried out some new recipes, and took some unforgettable road trips down America's back roads. I'm unemployed, yet I feel alive.

It's a shame that Meyer fails to view his situation with even a glimmer of hope or excitement. He's preoccupied far more with what he wants to get from the world than with what he intends to contribute to it. The important lesson to learn here is that it's not so much what happens to us in life that matters as it's how we choose to react to it.

Wanda Harold
Chicago

When, like G. J. Meyer, I was shuttled into a room and informed that I would be let go, I'm sure that my terminator's intention was to act graceful and to seem concerned with my situation. Unfortunately, the same personnel officer who was in charge of firing employees was responsible for hiring them as well. At the end of our meeting, when he reached out to shake my hand and wish me good luck, he accidentally slipped and said, "Welcome aboard."

Frank Berin
Los Angeles

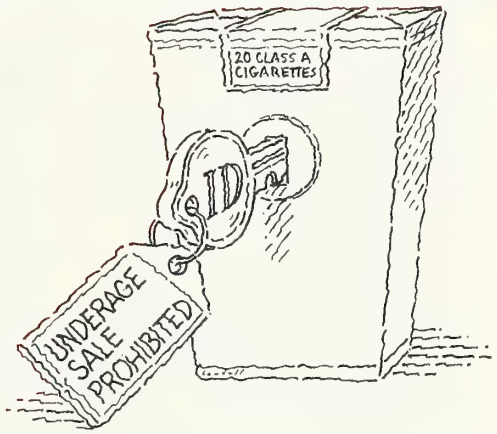
Explosive Rhetoric

While analyzing "the message of the Oklahoma bombing" ["Seen bu

Continued on page 9

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TALES FROM THE



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Chapter One

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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*Cargo space measured with seats upright. †All comparisons and figures represent 1995 model year vehicles, except for the 1996 Subaru Legacy Outback. Ground clearance based on manufacturer's published specs.

NOTEBOOK

Entr'acte

By Lewis H. Lapham

Late Saturday morning in August on the terrace of a resort hotel in Colorado Springs. The view of the Rocky Mountains is due west and suitable for framing on a postcard. Sixty or seventy people, most of them corporate executives, stand in small groups or sit at wicker tables above the eighteenth green. They are attending a conference organized by a Republican policy institute under the rubric "Renewing America's Moral Purpose," and it is the interval between the final workshop and plenary sessions. The conference began Thursday evening with a keynote speech by William Bennett. On Friday the guests listened to presentations from Lynne Cheney, Cal Thomas, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and Malcolm Forbes Jr. Dressed for the golf tournament scheduled to take place after lunch (after the concluding remarks by George Will), all present wear name badges and carry briefing books in which they have been collecting texts of the speeches as well as extended quotations (selected by the conference staff) from the works of, among others, J. Stuart Mill, John Adams, and Milton Friedman.

The two men seated by chance at the table nearest the shopping arcade know one another only from the biographical notes appended to the calendar of events: WILSON BLAKE CHANDLER, *president and chief executive officer of a film-distribution company headquartered in Orange County, California, and* WARREN G. HOWELLS, *managing partner of a New York bank. Chandler is a man in his early fifties, heavyset and relentlessly genial, an inveterate goer to conferences and an ardent believer in Republican causes. Very pleased with himself (with his real estate investments, his acquaintance with Hollywood celebrities, and his silver-gray hair), he wears steel-rimmed aviator glasses in a style recommended to him by Bruce Willis. Howells is ten years older and more sophisticated. Once having run the bank's operations in Europe, he is the proprietor of a well-known château and vineyard in Normandy, a student of the French Revolution, and the only man on the terrace who still reads the novels of Balzac and Jane Austen. He had hoped to avoid the conference, but circumstance (the illness of the partner scheduled to attend) has sent him to Colorado Springs instead of Deauville. Knowing that he's expected to say something, Howells glances at the badge on Chandler's shirt to make sure that he's got the name right.*

CHANDLER (*smiling broadly*): Most people call me Toby.

HOWELLS: You go to a lot of conferences, Toby?

CHANDLER: Five, maybe six times a year.

HOWELLS: I haven't been to one of these things since the year that Reagan was elected president.

CHANDLER (*expansively, as if showing off a beach house to a prospective buyer*): Best minds in America, Warren, none of them politically correct.

HOWELLS: I'd forgotten that everybody was so worried about everybody else's morals.

CHANDLER: It's about time that somebody did some serious worrying. The country's in terrible shape. Not many of them left with the courage of their convictions.

HOWELLS: You don't think that maybe they lay it on a little thick?

CHANDLER (*very somber, very grave*): You've seen the numbers. Country's in terrible shape . . . you've seen the numbers. Crime rates, teenage pregnancy, too much sex and violence on the television, drugs.

A waiter passes a tray of pastries, and Chandler hesitates over the choice between the apple tarts, the coffee cake, and the brioche.

HOWELLS: Try the one with the cinnamon. It'll make you feel better about the eleven o'clock news.

CHANDLER (*vaguely annoyed by Howells's tone*): Maybe you haven't been listening closely enough, Warren.

HOWELLS: I'm enjoying the view.

CHANDLER (*firmly, coming back to the crisis at hand*): Bennett said it all on Thursday night. We're squandering our moral heritage . . . losing our competitiveness, letting Sixties radicals teach in the universities.

Behind Chandler's left shoulder, among the group of men standing at the buffet table, Howells can see the presidents of three corporations for which his bank found foreign buyers. Each of them realized profits in excess of $40 million from the deals, profits that they promptly moved to Switzerland. Howells arranged the transfers through his own agent in Zurich.

HOWELLS (*reassuringly*): You don't have to worry about the college kids. A year after graduation they're in law school or working for Goldman Sachs. They listen to their professors the same way that they listen to their maiden aunts.

CHANDLER (*smoothing his hair with both hands, like a potter shaping clay*): Still—and I don't mean any offense, Warren—you should be paying a little more attention.

Four golfers approach the eighteenth green, and Howells, watching them hit their balls into a pond, remembers that at dinner on Thursday night the chairman of a Fortune 500 company that hadn't paid any taxes for twelve years lectured the table about the need for a constitutional amendment protecting the American flag.

HOWELLS: You're not troubled by the contradictions?

CHANDLER (*who has been taking careful notes for two days*): I wouldn't say that I've noticed any contradictions.

HOWELLS: If the speakers want to present themselves as conservatives, defenders of tradition and upholders of the law, why are they so eager to discredit elected authority?

CHANDLER: Make fools of the Democrats. Make Clinton look like an ass.

HOWELLS: Yes, but they also make the Justice Department and the FBI look like fools, which is not something you want to do to the people who enforce the rules.

CHANDLER: The government is out of hand, Warren. You see the polls . . . you know what the American people think of Washington.

HOWELLS: I also know what the American people think of train wrecks and rabid dogs.

CHANDLER: The welfare state is what's damn near ruined this country.

HOWELLS: The welfare state is what's made most of us rich.

CHANDLER (*jokingly*): You sure we're at the same conference?

HOWELLS: Your Republican friends in Congress want to take away as much as possible from as many people as possible—jobs, bank loans, parks, schools, cigarettes—and at the same time they want to make sure that everybody can buy a gun. It's not a good approach, Toby.

CHANDLER: We don't do poor people any favors by coddling them with government handouts. Degrades them. Teaches them weakness and dependence. Kills their initiative.

The waiter returns with a tray of pastry fruit. Chandler confronts the decision between the strawberries and the grapes. The cost of the conference comes to $10,000 per head (the sum deductible as a business expense), and the staff does its best to provide an atmosphere conducive to thinking rigorous thoughts—fax machines in every room, white-water rafting expeditions, the emblems of the sponsoring corporations stamped on the golf balls.

CHANDLER: You heard what Phil Gramm said at breakfast this morning: the poor have lost the will to hunt . . . gotten used to turning in their food stamps for fancy condoms and gourmet cheese.

HOWELLS: If the poor regain the will to hunt, Toby, who do you think they'll come looking for?

CHANDLER (*complacently*): Political figure of speech. Gramm was talking about "the opportunity society," about kids staying in school and keeping their dicks out of twelve-year-old girls, about family values.

HOWELLS: Kennedy family values? Mafia family values? Simpson family values?

CHANDLER: Honesty. Thrift. Staying married. Loyalty. Going to picnics. You know, the good stuff. Principles that made America great.

To Howells's certain knowledge two of the gentlemen at the next table (the one in the yellow pants and the one laughing at a new joke about Hillary Clinton) narrowly escaped indictment in Arizona for their parts in a savings and loan swindle. Among the other fortunes present and accounted for, six depend on government subsidies, four on rigged stock deals, and two on gambling casinos.

HOWELLS: Look around the terrace, Toby. You see anyone who's made any serious money practicing family values?

CHANDLER: Entrepreneurs.

HOWELLS (*thinking about his daughter's bills at Princeton and the expense of keeping up the houses in Connecticut and Florida*): The values you're talking about cost a great deal of money.

CHANDLER (*shaking his head*): I've got to say, Warren, you're reading the wrong newspapers.

HOWELLS: Pretty soon family values will cost so much we'll have to sell them to the Japanese . . . with the fish and the trees.

CHANDLER: I'm talking about doing what's right, goddamnit . . . about morals.

HOWELLS: You're talking about people staying in line, doing what they're told.

CHANDLER: So what? What's the matter with that?

HOWELLS: Nothing's the matter with that. But what do you think keeps people in line?

CHANDLER (*remembering what Bill Bennett said*): Hard work. Patriotism. School prayer.

HOWELLS: The welfare state . . . the welfare state and the mass media. Bread and circuses.

CHANDLER: The mass media are the worst thing to happen to this country since Pearl Harbor.

HOWELLS: You're in the business, Toby. You should know better than anyone else that without the comforts of the media, the members of the audience might ask unpleasant questions.

CHANDLER: Come on, Warren. You know what I mean . . . the bad news, the constant criticism—

HOWELLS: Might think too much about what you charge them to see Mel Gibson blow up a building or Demi Moore take off her dress.

CHANDLER (*sullen*): Sam Donaldson tells lies.

HOWELLS: So do your lawyers. So do I. So does Newt Gingrich.

CHANDLER: Goddamnit, Warren, the truth—

HOWELLS: The truth is that we need a lot of lies to get from one day to the next. If we began telling each other the truth, what do you think would happen to the American way of life? Who would write the commencement speeches or the ads for next year's cars? What hairdresser could survive an afternoon's appointment? What tailor could sell another suit?

The coffee has gone cold. Chandler, irritated, snaps his fingers in the direction of the waiter.

HANDLER: You really should think about getting the hell out of New York, Warren. The city's making you cynical.

OWELLS: Not cynical. Practical.

HANDLER (*affably*): Next thing you know, you'll believe in affirmative action.

OWELLS: It's not much of a price to pay for the pretense that the system works the way it's supposed to work.

HANDLER: Hiring people who don't know how to read or write? Who can't speak English? Goddamnit, they're unqualified.

OWELLS: Most people are unqualified. You think Gramm is qualified? Or any of the rest of us? We have credentials—which isn't the same thing.

A different waiter brings more orange ice and another pot of coffee. While he changes the cups, the murmur of self-satisfied voices elsewhere on the terrace can be heard dwelling on the same sets of devout observance—the brilliance of Michael Eisner surpassed only by the genius of Michael Ovitz, the unbalanced budget compared to quicksand and venomous toads, the Balkans traditionally in need of a little corrective bombing—like the tinkling of bells in church.

OWELLS: You mind if I ask you a personal question, Toby?

HANDLER: Not if I'm going to read the answer in the goddamn *Washington Post*.

OWELLS: What were your earnings last year, salary and bonus?

HANDLER: With the stock options?

OWELLS (*nods*): The stock options and the travel and the club memberships and the medical insurance.

HANDLER (*contentedly smoothing his hair*): Two million four.

OWELLS: And the clerks who run your computers in Barbados and Taiwan, what did they earn?

HANDLER: I really don't know—$20,000 maybe. Maybe less, maybe more.

OWELLS: And the number of days that you show up at the office?

HANDLER: I sit on a lot of corporate boards, travel around a lot for directors' meetings.

HOWELLS: And your wife?

CHANDLER: She likes to go to the meetings when they're in Europe.

HOWELLS: First wife?

CHANDLER: Third.

A young woman attached to the conference staff appears on the terrace carrying copies of the agenda for the forthcoming plenary session—an impressive weight of paper that she begins to distribute among the attendees. At the bend of the dogleg on the eighteenth fairway another foursome studies the water hazard.

HOWELLS: You ever wonder why it is, Toby, that unearned money corrupts only the poor, never the rich?

CHANDLER (*unhesitatingly, while reaching for the last strawberry*): Poor don't know how to handle it, don't know what it's for.

HOWELLS: Something in their character, you think?

CHANDLER: They don't go to school. Never see any good examples.

HOWELLS: Never learn how to cheat on their tax returns or marry a woman with $70 million or trade stock tips with their friends?

CHANDLER: Goddamnit, Warren. What are you trying to say? That we're all swindlers and tax cheats?

HOWELLS: Figure of speech.

CHANDLER (*warily*): You're a banker, and you think that something's wrong with capitalism?

HOWELLS: Not with capitalism. With people who think that unregulated markets are synonyms for Christian charity.

CHANDLER: You don't like what you've got?

HOWELLS: What we have here under the aspen trees is a truly marvelous work of financial machinery—at least for the people who know how to operate it. I don't want to lose it.

CHANDLER (*surprised*): Lose? What do you mean, lose? The Republicans have the majority in Congress. Next year we're going to win the White House. Whole damn country's moving to the right, coming to its senses.

HOWELLS: Five or ten years from now, when the suburban vote finds out who killed its golden goose, who do you think will be blamed?

CHANDLER: The intellectuals . . . the media.

HOWELLS: You own the intellectuals and the media.

CHANDLER: Liberals.

HOWELLS: Gum up the engine of greed with too much piety and the suburbs will vote for an autocracy even more repressive than the one Buchanan has in mind.

CHANDLER (*offended*): Buchanan is a great American.

HOWELLS: Buchanan is as dumb as Robespierre. What he's proposing is a reign of virtue.

CHANDLER (*Condescendingly. He has been reading the assigned pages of Thomas Jefferson and Alvin Toffler*): I think you're forgetting a few important facts, Warren—the information-based economy, the free market, that America is a democracy.

HOWELLS: You don't know any democrats, Toby. Be glad of it. They leave stains on the floors.

The young woman with the documents hands Howells and Chandler their copies of the agenda, and says that the plenary session will begin in five minutes. Chandler fits his new pieces of paper into the three-ringed briefing book (embossed with the policy institute's motto and seal) and rises briskly to his feet. Howells glances at the list of discussion points and sees that the conference means to address the problem of casting the democratic idea into a forceful foreign policy: How does a morally re-awakened America shine the light of freedom on a darkening and discordant world?

CHANDLER (*joining a group of men walking toward the conference tables in the Wyatt Earp Room*): Well, I guess recess is over.

Howells doesn't move. It occurs to him that if the Republican theory of the universe were an issue traded on the New York Stock Exchange, he would buy it as a short-term speculation, not as a long-term investment. The golfers approaching the eighteenth green, as reliable as their predecessors in their misjudgment of the distance and the wind, solemnly hit their balls into the pond. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Chances that an American believes Bob Dole is "too nasty" to make a good president : 1 in 4
Ratio of the number of Republicans who say Dole is too conservative to those saying he is not conservative enough : 1:1
Rank of the NRA among the organizations that spent the most on House and Senate campaigns last year : 1
Chances that a Republican House member voted last June against a constitutional amendment banning flag desecration : 1 in 20
Chances that a Democrat did : 1 in 2
Ratio of the annual budget of the National Endowment for the Arts to the cost of producing *Waterworld* : 1:1
Chances that watching *The Bridges of Madison County* will bring a man to tears : 2 in 3
Hours of Newt Gingrich lectures to be broadcast in Phoenix jails this year as part of the sheriff's "get tough" campaign : 20
Minutes of "delightful conversation" Senator Jesse Helms says he had last April with Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto : 60
Number of minutes after the conversation ended that he introduced her to the Senate as the leader of India : 10
Percentage of Americans who say that journalists are more cynical than other professionals : 45
Percentage of journalists who say this : 54
Number of years ago the executive news producer of NBC's New York City station was producing Howard Stern's TV show : 3
Average amount Americans spent on lottery tickets each day last year : $93,000,000
Average amount Americans contributed to the U.S. Treasury each day to help reduce the national debt : $56,743
Amount an auditor estimated last year that Oregon could save each year by feeding prisoners less food : $62,000
Number of microwave ovens blown up at a New York State prison this year by inmates trying to light cigarettes : 15
Hours per day that the L.A. Central Jail runs its dry-cleaning machines to prepare prisoners' street clothes for storage : 24
Number of mail-order catalogues distributed worldwide last year by the L.A. County Coroner's gift shop : 10,000
Number of people who attended the World Dracula Congress held last May in Bucharest : 200
Price of a six-day how-to course in prostitution from Amsterdam's Prostitute Information Centre : $160
Price of a 4-ounce bottle of shampoo containing a chemical cloned from human sperm, from a Beverly Hills boutique : $25
Number of years a Utah man had been married before discovering last April that his wife was a man : 3.5
Dimensions, in inches, of a gauze pad left in an Iowa man during an operation last year : 14 x 14
Number of Wal-Mart plastic owls a NASA employee bought last May to protect the space shuttle from woodpeckers : 6
Ratio of the number of doctors currently employed by the Pentagon to the maximum number required during wartime : 2:1
Number of states in which this year's military base closures will cause no net job losses : 24
Number of states in which a black college graduate's average income is at least 90 percent of a white college graduate's : 4
Change since 1979 in the median earnings of an American woman with a full-time job, in constant dollars : +$1,925
Change in the median earnings of an American man with a full-time job : – $2,816
Number of times the phrase "affirmative action" appears in the text of California's proposed Civil Rights Initiative : 0
Percentage of Californians favoring the initiative who do not know that it will eliminate affirmative action : 47
Chances that a federal job-training program keeps records of its clients' placement rates : 1 in 2
Percentage by which today's minimum wage would be increased if its growth since 1968 had kept pace with inflation : 53
Percentage of Americans who believe their financial situation is "at least somewhat" reflective of "God's regard" for them : 70
Amount an Alabama church raised last winter by staging a "Coon Hunt for Christ" : $2,500
Percentage of regular public-TV viewers who donated money to their local station last year : 5
Chances that an American adult can define the term "channel surfing" : 2 in 3
Chances that an American child over the age of nine can define the word "Internet" : 1 in 6

Figures cited are the latest available as of August 1995. Sources are listed on page 86.
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READINGS

[Essay]

BEAUTY'S SECRETS

From "Dealing with What's Dealt," by Nancy Huston, in the Spring/Summer issue of Salmagundi. *Huston is a Canadian-born writer living in Paris; she is the author of twelve books of fiction and non-fiction, written in French.*

I'm beautiful. It's lasted quite a long time, this beauty of mine, but it won't be lasting much longer because I'm forty now, as I'm writing this, forty now and probably by the time you read it forty-one, and so on and so forth, and we all know it ends up as worms or ashes, but for the time being I'm still beautiful. More or less. Less than I used to be, despite the regular application of henna to my graying hair and concealer to the rings beneath my eyes. Less than Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who is precisely my age. Less than many of my students now—but still, perhaps, a little more than my eleven-year-old daughter.

I'm also intelligent. Less so than Simone Weil. My intelligence, too, is already going downhill—though differently from my beauty—and it, too, will end up as worms or ashes. But still. For the time being I'm quite intelligent.

When I say I'm beautiful and intelligent, I'm not boasting. All I've done is take reasonable care of the beauty and intelligence programmed into me by the dice toss of my parents' chromosomes. How is it possible to boast about things for which one is not responsible?

We are dealt a hand at birth: some of the cards are genetic (skin color, musical talent, bunions), others are cultural (religion, language, nationality), but all are given rather than chosen. Later, as adults, we can make a conscious decision to change a few of the cards in our hands—by converting from Catholicism to Judaism, for example, or by moving to another country, or even by having a sex-change operation—but the original deal inevitably leaves its deep and indelible imprint on us.

I've never quite understood people's boasting about their destiny-dealt hand, though it's certainly a ubiquitous phenomenon. Perhaps my own origins are too bland to have instilled in me this sort of pride: it's never occurred to me to derive self-esteem from the fact that I was born in Calgary, Alberta, or that I was raised a Protestant or that I have white skin or that I am female. Likewise, I'm responsible for neither my beauty nor my intelligence, which have been two incredibly salient features of the forty years I've spent on this earth so far—and which, until today, I've never had the courage to write about.

My beauty has gotten me many places, to some of which I very badly wanted to go and to some of which I did not want to go at all. Over the years, I've watched it attack and corrode borders, then take me with it into foreign territories. Borders are ideas erected between age groups, social classes, all sorts of hierarchical entities, so that society may function as predictably and as decently as possible. They are not solid brick walls. Beauty eats them away.

I was not particularly beautiful as a child. I started getting that way at around age fifteen, when I was a junior in high school, and as soon as it happened I seduced and/or was seduced by my creative writing teacher. He was ten years older than I, and, shortly before the end of the school year, he took whatever virginity that childhood sex games with my brother had left me. I was thrilled, flattered, crazily in love, and, for a long time, proud—yes, proud, for this was something in which my responsibility was implicated. The love affair was a serious one. It

[Proposal]

THE NEW NEW FEMINISM

From an anonymous letter sent in February to Eastsideweek, *a Seattle newspaper.*

WHY A LOT OF MEN WILL BE WINNERS BY BECOMING FEMINISTS

Until recently I was against the feminist movement and even hated women, although I am a straight man. The reason was very simple: for many years I did not have enough sex. (I still don't have enough.) I was wondering why, since I am not ugly, I dress well, and I am not disabled or mentally retarded. A lot of men I know who don't make a lot of money have the same problem. I have never been wealthy, so I thought that women were causing this sexual problem because they were being too materialistic.

Recently I realized that it is not women but we men who create this situation. Men with a lot of money not only can but usually do have several women. IRS statistics show that more than 15 percent of Americans have incomes greater than $50,000 per year. As we know, the majority of people with big incomes are men, so it makes sense to assume that at least 20 percent of the male population are making more than $50,000 a year. Meanwhile, another 20 percent of men make less than $20,000. These men can hardly afford to impress a woman with their standard of living. Not so for the big moneymaker: he can afford not only to have a more impressive standard of living (housing, car) but also to pay for several women (restaurants, vacations, cash, expensive presents). The rich 20 percent can easily satisfy 40 percent of the nation's women, thus creating a big shortage of sexually unsatisfied women.

What surprising conclusion did I draw from this? Become a feminist. Let as many women as possible become big moneymakers so that the number of male big moneymakers decreases, thereby increasing the supply of unsatisfied women! The message for men is simple: when you need a service, go to a woman; when you vote, vote for a woman; use the *Women's Yellow Pages* whenever possible. Don't help a man become stronger financially and thereby eliminate you sexually. The faster we spread this message, the sooner we will feel the results.

culminated in engagement—an engagement I broke off at age eighteen, when I fell in love with someone else. For nearly three years, then, my life revolved around this man. There was no sexual harassment involved.

Ah, but was he not taking advantage of his position? Of his superior education? Of the intellectual awe in which I held him? He certainly was, just as I was taking advantage of my youth, beauty, and whatever innocence I still appeared to possess. We wanted the same thing, which was to be in love with each other.

Other borders eaten away by my beauty I would rather have seen preserved. For example, I could have done without having my thighs stroked by the gray-haired doctor who performed my first gynecological examination, or my eyes longingly stared into by the bespectacled young dentist who removed my impacted wisdom teeth. Probably since the Stone Age, beautiful (and less beautiful) girls have needed to learn to defend themselves—whether through sarcasm, cool rejection, or karate chops—against these annoying infringements on their integrity. They can come from almost anyone—including, unexceptionally, women. The only criterion for whether this behavior is oppressive is whether one is made uncomfortable by it—that is, whether or not there is space and desire for response, interaction.

At the age of twenty, I came to Paris to spend my junior year abroad, then went on to spend my senior year abroad and to do a master's degree abroad, and now, twenty years and two French children later, I have hit upon the perfect inscription for my tombstone: "Once abroad, always abroad."

Oddly enough, despite Frenchmen's worldwide reputation for being sexually obsessed, my dealings in France with professors, employers, gynecologists, dentists, and shrinks have all been relatively maul-free. It seems to me that as a general rule (and with all the usual caveats regarding this sort of generalization), the French accept the fact that they have and are bodies. The prevailing social decorum is not as all-or-nothing as it is in the States, where the choice seems to be either overt sexual contact or feigned indifference to all physical characteristics. In France there is an intermediary level of communication based on the constant exchange of glances, witty remarks, hand gestures, and the like. Both men and women take part in this exchange. Since the French do not attempt to radically rid social existence of physicality, they are not in such a state of patent contradiction and frustration as are the Americans (I think I am mainly speak-



"Pretzel Décolleté with Cheez Doodle Choker," from a series of photographs by Robert Kushner and Stanley Stellar featured in the Spring issue of Art Journal. *In the 1970s, Kushner staged two performance pieces in Los Angeles art galleries,* Costumes Constructed and Eaten *and* Robert Kushner and Friends Eat Their Clothes, *in which the artist and his friends "informally moved around the room talking with each other and the public" while wearing, exchanging, and eating from costumes made out of carrots, cabbage leaves, strands of Cheerios and Froot Loops, black licorice whips, and other foods. Recently Kushner and Stellar, a New York City photographer, reconstructed and photographed the costumes worn in those shows.*

ing of white Americans here). In short, the French tend to value the art of sublimation.

Admittedly, there have been occasions in France on which I've felt my beauty to be a handicap. Once or twice I've narrowly escaped rape; more than once or twice I've had nagging doubts about whether a person's enthusiasm for one of my books or articles might not be rightfully due to my big blue eyes. This has tended to make me insecure—and even, sporadically, miserable. But I refuse to exaggerate. These are small dramas. My beauty has never made me as miserable as an assembly-line worker, or a crack addict, or a mother on welfare.

I have also—calmly, naturally, as every beautiful woman knows how to do—allowed my beauty to bring me minor favors and advantages: faster service in restaurants, increased courtesy in libraries, more humorous and less expensive exchanges with policemen. The occasions have literally been countless. They have also been unavoidable—to avoid them, I should have had to disguise myself as an ugly person (as did Simone Weil) by wearing thick black glasses and dressing in frumpy clothes.

Having worked at such wildly disparate professions as masseuse and feminist journalist, nude model and English professor, bar "hostess" and guest lecturer at prestigious universities, I am probably in a better position than most to revolt against the bad faith so prevalent in the United States today. Its adherents pretend that our minds do not live in bodies, and that we respond to each other's minds independently of each other's bodies, and that what we love in each other when we make love to each other's bodies is not also, in large part, each other's minds, and that professors can teach and students study without their bodies ever being present in the classroom, and that bosses and employees and colleagues can interact professionally without their bod-

ies ever being present in the office or factory, and that, moreover, it is possible for bodies to miraculously burst into existence when, in private darkened bedrooms, all systems are suddenly said to be "go," whereas they have been forced to be "stop," "stop," "stop," and "stop" all day long, in every other situation.

These American bodies are no longer allowed to smoke, they are no longer allowed to joke, they are no longer allowed to smell; all of their sexy ambiguities have been banished to oblivion; war has been declared on their capacity for innuendo; flirting has been outlawed because it presupposes inequality (or, more accurately, flirting underlines, renders flagrant and therefore undeniable, the inequality that in fact exists between the beautiful and the less beautiful, the intelligent and the less intelligent, the funny and the less funny). Oh, at all costs let us not recognize these sorts of inequality, let us cover our eyes and pinch our noses and plug our ears in front of them; the workplace is for getting work done and schools and universities are for getting an education and restaurants are for eating and bars are for drinking and streets are for striding purposefully from one place to another and none of these places is an appropriate place for bodies, for sensuality, for sidelong glances; all forms of physical exchange between human bodies must be as predictable and safe and contractual as the sale of a house.

Again, let me attempt to be clear and discerning and calm. People who study well and write good papers, whether they are beautiful or ugly, brown or yellow, tall or short, should receive good marks; and people who have appropriate qualifications and experience should never need to consent to being sodomized by the powers-that-be in order to get a job or a degree or a promotion. The role of beauty—and every other culturally or genetically inherited factor—in such situations as legal trials, political elections, thesis defenses, and tenure hearings should be as close to zero as possible.

In public life, in other words, modern democratic institutions are rightly required to be blind to physical traits. At the opposite end of the spectrum there is lovemaking, in which physicality is all-encompassing. But in between the two there is social existence—life on the job, in the neighborhood, at school, in the subway—a fascinating, shimmering, shifting mix of public and private, physical and spiritual, proximity and distance, conformity and spontaneity. This crucial middle ground (of which, of course, physicality is but one of numerous aspects) is currently being eroded to nothingness in the United States by maniacal moralism and ludicrous legalism. And the compulsion to aberrant sexual behavior is worsened, not attenuated, when sociality is thus unnaturally invaded by moral imperatives and declarations and calculations.

My daughter is also turning out to be beautiful and intelligent, which means that, in addition to teaching her to eschew boasting about it, I shall need to teach her a certain number of things about what sort of treatment she can expect at the hands of the world, just as parents have always prepared their children for the (positive and negative) effects of being Ukrain-

[How-to]

HEAVY PETTING

From "Dog Massage: The Lowdown on a Good Rubdown," by Joni Herigstad, in the November/December 1994 issue of Good Dog! *magazine, published in Charleston, South Carolina.*

Begin by choosing an area that has a tranquil atmosphere. Start the massage by giving your dog the strokes of affection he's used to. Then move on to light feathery scratches on the chest area, cascading down to his belly. This feels good and reassures your pet that nothing unusual is about to happen.

With your hands resting lightly on his stomach, use slight pressure and glide your hands back up to the chest. Circle around in a swirling motion, following the contour of the rib cage, sweeping out, down, and around.

Use your voice. This is a vital part of the massage, bringing with it a mellowing effect. Talk in a soft, soothing tone: "You're so big and strong. What a good doggie you are. Oh, your fur's so soft and silky."

Now let's move into the thick, fleshy fur on the neck. Allow your fingers to travel freely up and around the back of the ears. This is always felt as a welcome dig.

The next step is to massage the leg muscles. Use light pressure and trace down the top of the thigh. Don't be surprised if a back leg starts to kick like a jackrabbit's. Let it shake, shiver, and twitch in ecstasy.

Remember to take things at the pace your dog allows. A dog massage can last only as long as your pet is in the mood. Remember: it's not the length of time that's important; it's the quality of the time you spend together.

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ian, Tasmanian, Jewish, Catholic, white, black, hemophiliac, red-haired, skinny, knock-kneed, and so on and so forth, including all the possible combinations of these traits.

Though all these factors will have more or less weighty consequences depending on the geographical, historical, political, and social context in which one grows up, they are part of the hand one is dealt at life's outset. There is no fatalism here; I don't mean that once you get your cards the game is tantamount to over. I simply mean that all of us play the game according to the cards we have in our hand—bluffing and feinting, discarding and drawing, trying to influence the other players, winning and losing. The progressive/liberal/revolutionary/existential philosophies we have espoused over the past couple of hundred years have tended to blind us to this simple truth, universally recognized by novelists and children: one deals with what is dealt.

[Warning]

CONFESSIONS OF AN ABORTION WARRIOR

From an open letter to anti-abortion activists written by Shelley Shannon, an Oregon woman who was sentenced last year to a ten-year prison term for the attempted murder of Dr. George R. Tiller, a doctor at an abortion clinic in Wichita, Kansas. Shannon's letter was published in April in Prayer & Action Weekly News, *a newsletter for anti-abortion activists.*

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

—James 5:16

Out of obedience to the verse above, and in spite of problems it may bring her with the authorities, Shelley Shannon shares the following:

Anyone who doesn't know a lot about other people's crimes or is not willing to "snitch" on his friends ends up with a lot more jail time than an individual who "cooperates." That's the way the Feds operate. I tried to take a cooperating deal (I could have got my time down to five years!), and I did give the Feds information, which is my reason for writing this. Part of the deal was that I would tell them exactly what I did and didn't do.

The Feds are working on a lot of different puzzles—if they put together enough pieces, they will be able to see a picture. I gave them too many pieces to too many puzzles in a selfish effort to save my own life. I really didn't know whether or not it was the right thing to do. *Everyone* seemed to want me to. I begged God over and over to show me. I read verses about agreeing with the adversary. But later, I started reading about Judas the traitor. Shortly thereafter, my attorney called off the agreement. What finally helped break it off was that I failed two polygraph tests. I said that I did not know the true identities of Atomic Dog and Mad Gluer. The machine said I lied both times.

I'm humiliated to admit all that I told them, but since this affects other people, I feel a need to try to undo some of the damage. Without saying what is true and what isn't, I'll try to remember what I said about whom, for those who need to know, explaining as little as possible.

In the presence of prosecutors, the FBI, the ATF, and two men Janet Reno sent from D.C., I admitted that I didn't do Redding or Boise [set fires that damaged abortion clinics there] and that I know who did. I did not give them a name. Thankfully we didn't get that far in our deal. However, I did say it was someone who was not associated with pro-life activities, except for some prior "criminal mischief" he was never arrested for, and that he is about six feet tall. They may suspect that he lives in the Grants Pass area [of Oregon]. A polygraph proved that I didn't do Boise or Redding but was inconclusive as to whether or not someone else told me that they did it.

During the questioning they went through my notes. I kept detailed accounts of most of my pro-life activism. I also saved letters. If you ever sent me anything, please assume the Feds have it.

My notes said that two people convinced me that God is calling them to shoot abortionists. I didn't give them those names. I don't believe they have any clues to the identities of those people. However, they do know that one of them plans to shoot Dr. Edward Allred [the owner of several abortion clinics in California]. I can only hope that someone else will somehow inform the person who wants to shoot Allred that the Feds know. Not by phone or mail, though!

Going through my diaries, they learned who Tablet, Handbag, and Cal are; that John Witte sent me "Determined Rescue info" (clippings, one document, and a Rescue America newsletter); that Trina was against the use of force at first; that I wrote Fairy Tale (I was both Shaggy West and Mad Momma); that I don't remember the identity of "A.C." (the one who gave me a map that I used); that I saved a letter from Danny B. explaining a way to blow up a building.

I hope the soldiers still out there leave other people out of their activities. Don't tell anyone


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anything or you may put them in the position of someday having to choose between their freedom and yours. If you're keeping diaries and notes, the Feds will take them very seriously after your arrest. If you ever start talking to Feds, you could easily get caught up in something that's not easy to get out of.

There was pressure from everyone: "What if you don't cooperate and you spend your whole life in prison and the others get caught anyway?" "It's time for you to quit. You did your part. Now you need to think about your husband and kids and grandkids." "There's never anything wrong with telling the truth." "People shouldn't have told you anything if they didn't want it known." *Everyone* was saying make a deal, *no one* was saying don't. I was stressed past being able to think straight, compounded by being here, with loudmouthed crazy lesbians, lights that stay on all night, no chance of seeing the outdoors or breathing fresh air. But when I tried to make a deal, I had no peace. I always felt despair. I wanted to die and had thoughts of suicide for the first time in my life. I should have known it would be better to get five hundred years in prison myself than to land other people there. If life in prison is God's will, then that's what's best. I have God's peace. I hope to avoid any further "cooperation" even if I do get three hundred years. May God have mercy and forgive my compromise, and I pray the same of my friends.

Love, Shelley

[Envelope]

DE-REHABILITATING NIXON



"The Nixon Envelope," by Arsen Melkonian, a Santa Cruz, California, animator. Melkonian created the envelope for use with the Richard Nixon commemorative postage stamp issued by the post office in April; the envelope, which is sold in various stores in Santa Cruz, is shown here with the stamp affixed.

[Appraisal]

HERE COME THE DOLE DEMOCRATS

From a confidential memo sent in July to President Clinton and other White House officials by Stanley Greenberg, Clinton's chief pollster. The memo was obtained by CNN.

To: President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Tipper Gore, Leon Panetta, Harold Ickes, George Stephanopoulos, Erskine Bowles

Re: The President and Downscale America—the Primary Challenge for 1996

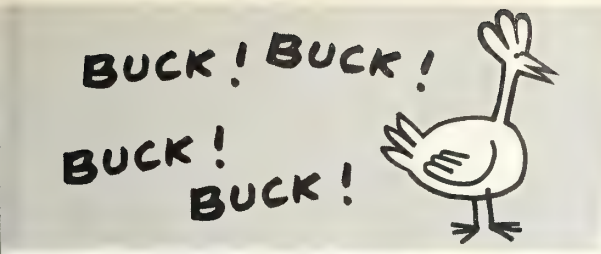
We all understand that the President faces a difficult campaign for re-election. In planning the President's comeback, it is important that we also understand the principal obstacle standing in our way: the defection and disillusionment of working-class and non-college white voters.

The President is fundamentally mispositioned for 1996. In white, downscale America, the President and his administration seem very distant. People question whether his initiatives matter to them, whether he understands and identifies with their lives and daily struggles, and whether he is personally strong enough to bring order to a world that is breaking down. The breakdown of identification with the President among the lesser educated seriously limits the size of the potential Clinton bloc and lengthens our odds for 1996.

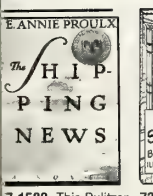
Among those who went to the polls for the 1994 congressional election, it was the downscale voters who turned sharply against the Democrats and produced the new Republican congressional majorities. There was no voter revolt among the well-educated. In fact, nothing happened there. Postgraduates were a point *more* Democratic this year, while college graduates slipped only three points. But among those who did not complete college, the political world changed.

A sizable bloc of voters—at least one quarter—are very negative about all aspects of the economy. In a national survey conducted last month, I found that these "gloom and doom" voters are decidedly downscale. They are Democratic. And right now, they are voting overwhelmingly for Bob Dole.

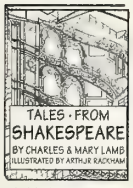
- "Gloom and doom" voters disproportionately have no college degree, are women, and have incomes below the national average.
- One out of every five "gloom and doom" voters is a union member—suggesting strong



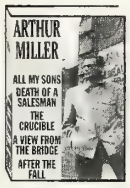
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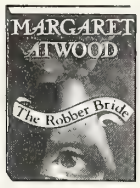
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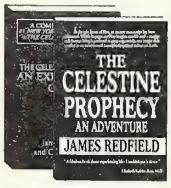
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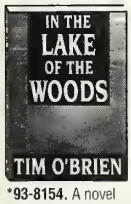
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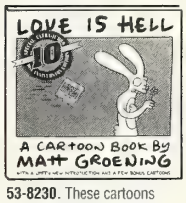
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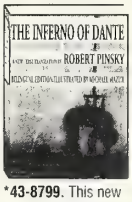
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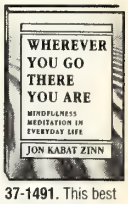
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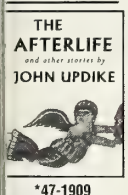
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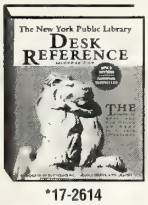
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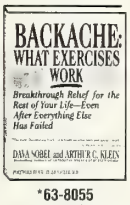
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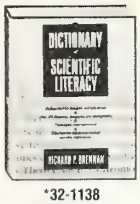
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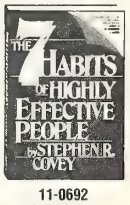
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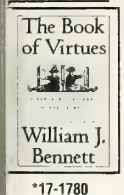
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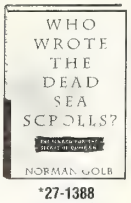
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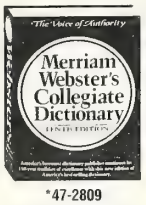
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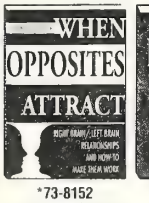
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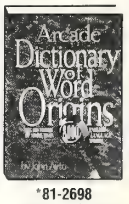
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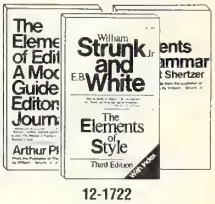
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worries about the changes in the economy.

• The "gloom and doom" voters are twelve points more Democratic on party identification, yet vote for Dole over Clinton by twelve points.

Recent academic research suggests that voters with a college degree tend not to base their presidential vote on the economy; they are more inclined to compare the policy positions of the two candidates and make judgments about their future performance. But the downscale electorate is predisposed to dwell on incumbent performance and more likely to use the economy as a standard of judgment. As must be evident, we are walking into a potential storm.

[Précis]

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OLIVER STONE

From a list of suggested excerpts from a forthcoming biography of the film director Oliver Stone, distributed this spring to magazine editors by the book's publisher, Hyperion. The book, Stone: The Controversies, Excesses and Exploits of a Radical Filmmaker, *by James Riordan, will be published in December.*

PAGES	TOPICS
62–73	Stone as returning vet. First two scripts. Film school. Being taught by Scorsese. Thinking about killing Nixon.
107–16	Stone's first Oscar, for writing *Midnight Express*. Drunken speech at Golden Globes. Upsetting Puttnam and others. Reputation as a Hollywood rebel. *Born on the Fourth of July*. Al Pacino walks out.
126–33	Cocaine use. Fighting with Al Pacino, Brian DePalma, and the producer over *Scarface*.
155–69	James Woods on beating out Martin Sheen for lead in *Salvador*. Jim Belushi on Woods's scene-stealing tactics. Woods and Stone fighting and Woods walking off set into desert. Money continuously falling through.
231–40	Battles with cast of *Wall Street*.
436–97	Stone's affairs and the breakup of his marriage.

[Omen]

MEET THE NEW BOSS

From a live interview broadcast on July 31 on ABC's Good Morning America. *Charles Gibson, the show's co-anchor, interviewed Thomas Murphy, the chairman and CEO of Capital Cities/ABC, and Michael Eisner, the chairman and CEO of the Walt Disney Company, a few minutes after Disney's acquisition of ABC was announced on the show.*

CHARLES GIBSON: Why is this a logical fit? I think it's fair to say that people get a little uneasy as companies get bigger and bigger. Is this a) good for the public, and b) why is it a good fit?

MICHAEL EISNER: Well, we're not bigger in an individual area. What we are is more diverse. We have had a big production company making animated movies and family programs and theme parks and things like that. ABC, on the other hand, has had a powerhouse of a broadcasting company. I still like to think of our company as a small family company. We just now have the ability with ABC, which, when I worked there, was also a small company—

GIBSON: Yes, but when you—

THOMAS MURPHY: Did you know he worked with ABC for ten years?

GIBSON: For ten years. But when you're spending $19 billion to buy a company, I mean, that's not a small family company anymore. Where's the little guy in the business anymore? Is this just a giant that forces everybody else out?

MURPHY: Well, as Michael said, we're not putting two television networks together or two studios together or two theme parks together. We're in allied fields, but we're in different fields. So I don't think there's any domination of any media or any part of the media so that we would be damaging competition in any way at all. . . . Charlie, let me ask you a question. Wouldn't you be proud to be associated with Disney?

GIBSON: I—I'm—

EISNER: There you go.

GIBSON: I—I never—

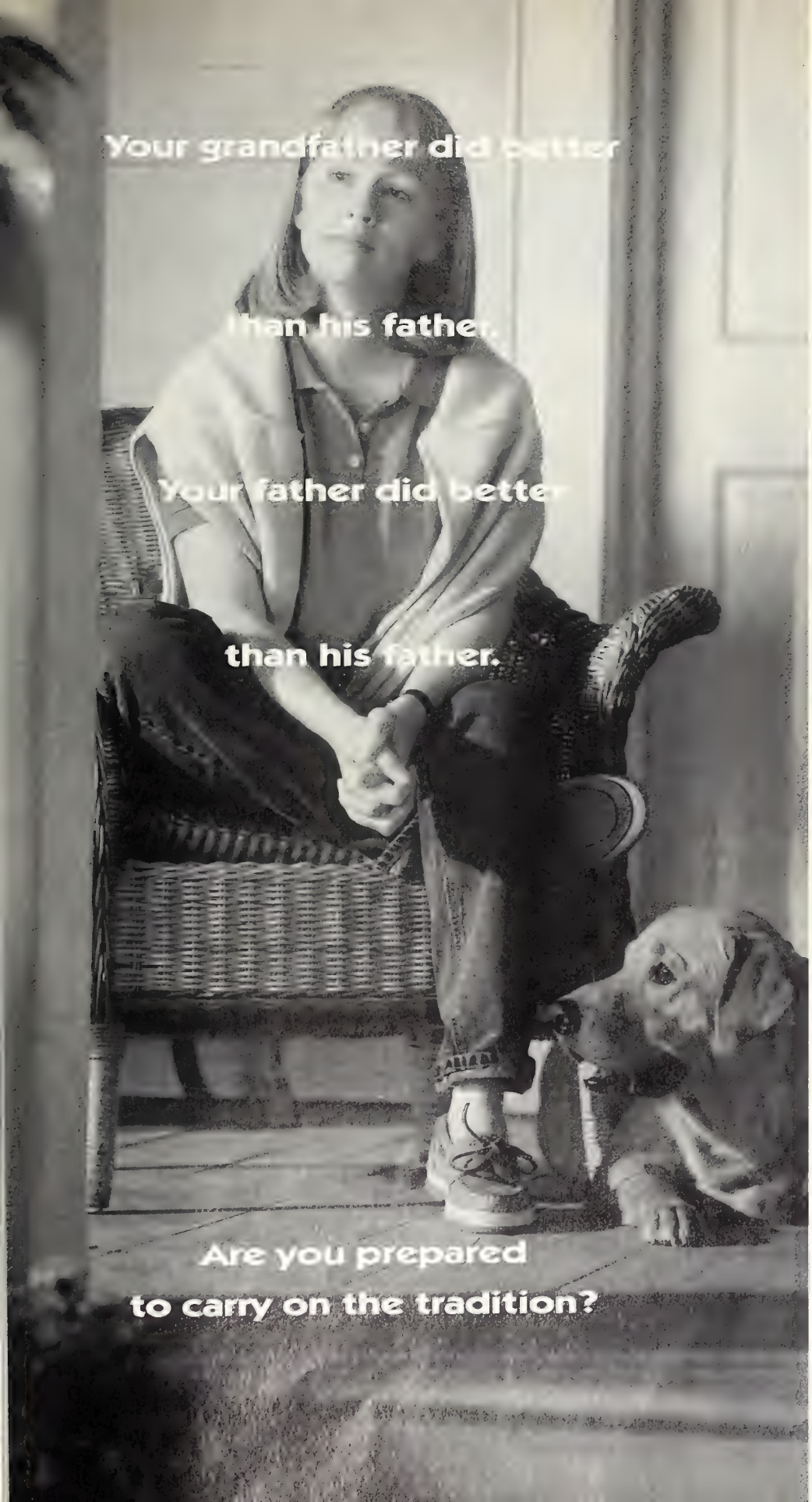
MURPHY: And I'm—no, this is—I'm serious—quite serious. I mean, that's—

GIBSON: I never thought I'd work—

MURPHY: I'm proud of it.

GIBSON: I never thought I'd work for a guy named Mickey. Yes, sure, I've [*unintelligible*]—

MURPHY: But it's *Snow White* and it's *The Lion King*, all those wonderful animated shows



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that they've done, all the creative energy in that company.

GIBSON: No, there are—there are changes in the marketplace and in the—in regulatory rules that make this somewhat logical, and I guess everyone is surprised, in some ways not surprised. There was a sort of logic to this that—that has made sense. I—I can't go in the tank and say, yes, this is great, you know, I mean, I have—I still have—here as an objective interviewer.

MURPHY: Kind of nice to get him, isn't it?

EISNER: Well, he's fumbling around there, isn't he? And on the air too—it's perfect. So you don't like the deal, do you, Charlie?

GIBSON: Don't you think this would be a good time for a commercial, everybody?

[Study]

MICHAEL EISNER'S TRAGIC FLAW?

From "Explaining Premiums Paid for Large Acquisitions: Evidence of CEO Hubris," by Mathew L. A. Hayward and Donald C. Hambrick. Hambrick, a professor at Columbia University's business school, and Hayward, a doctoral student, presented their study in August at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, in Vancouver.

Between 1976 and 1990, 35,000 corporate acquisitions were completed in the United States, with a combined value of $2.6 trillion; more corporate acquisitions were announced in 1994 than in any previous year. Yet for all this activity, executives who buy other companies generally fail to perform miracles with what they have acquired. In fact, research suggests that, on balance, acquisitions reduce the shareholder wealth of acquiring firms over both the short and long terms. For instance, following its successful battle with QVC to acquire Paramount, Viacom Corporation lost roughly one half of its stock value.

In every corporate takeover, the acquiring company must pay a premium for the target company's stock—that is, an amount in excess of the stock's current price. More often than not, these premiums are too high and end up costing the shareholders of acquiring companies. If excessive premiums are so damaging, why do so many acquisitors pay them? The answer, we believe, is that CEOs think too highly of their ability to extract value from acquisitions. In other words, they are infected by hubris.

In Greek mythology, those who were presumptuous toward the gods—excessively confident, blindly ambitious, or otherwise forgetful of their human status—were relentlessly struck down. Acquisitions are the perfect trap for the hubris-infected. With a single transaction, a CEO can radically transform the size and profile of his or her firm and perhaps enable it either to enter the Fortune 500 list, to move up on that list, or to enter an exciting industry. Even the most friendly acquisition involves an air of conquest—of winner and loser, dominance and submission. Given such high personal stakes, a CEO will have difficulty remaining detached and dispassionate about a potential deal.

We analyzed 106 large acquisitions and found three sources of hubris that tend to inflate the price an acquiring CEO is willing to pay for another company.

Recent success. CEOs tend to attribute their company's success to managerial excellence rather than to market trends or other external causes; as a result, CEOs of successful companies believe that their company is primed for entirely new challenges. The greater the CEO's confidence in his or her own abilities, the greater the benefit that the CEO believes he or she can bring to an acquired entity, and the higher the premium paid.

Self-importance. Some CEOs seem to believe in their abilities to the point of delusions of grandeur. They have an extreme sense of power, verging on arrogance, which plays a role in their strategic choices, including the premiums they pay in large acquisitions. Our measure of self-importance was the ratio of the CEO's pay to that of the second-highest-paid executive in the firm, which we took to be a telling indicator of the CEO's sense of potency and self-esteem. In our study, the higher the salary ratio, the higher the acquisition premium.

Media praise. In our sample, each highly favorable article about the CEO resulted, on average, in a 5.4 percent increase in premium paid. In a billion-dollar acquisition, one article would thus account for an increase of $54 million. "Romantic" CEO profiles may affect the CEO's self-image, fostering the delusion that he or she is in control, perhaps even a miracle worker. Such coverage also broadcasts to business and social circles a new level of prestige for the CEO. Acquaintances and business associates may start treating the CEO with increased awe, further boosting his or her perception of personal ability. It seems that some of the CEOs who pay extremely large acquisition premiums, on the assumption that they have the managerial ability to recoup extraordinary outlays, have literally come to believe their own press.

[Terrarium]
KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH NATURE



OREN SLOR

Scary Interface," an installation by Neil Goldberg, a New York City artist, to be shown in December at the P.S. 22 Gallery, in New York City. Visitors to the gallery can send messages to the tarantula's fax machine from a fax machine mounted next to the terrarium. Goldberg's sculpture "Shecky," which consisted of portraits of Borscht Belt comedians mounted on matzo, appeared in the February 1993 issue of Harper's Magazine.

[Essay]
THE WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION

From How to Tell When You're Tired: A Brief Examination of Work, *by Reg Theriault, published by W. W. Norton & Company. Theriault has worked for the last thirty years as a longshoreman in San Francisco.*

How can someone, hour after hour, day after day, year in and year out, tighten approximately the same nut to the same bolt and not go mad? That most working people do not, in fact, go mad is due in large measure to a phenomenon so common that it is found wherever people labor in industry: taking it easy. It would take some kind of real mental case to do all the work one could all day long. No one expects it. Taking it easy on the job while someone else covers your work, or "working on and off," as it is usually called in America, is an established part of the working life.

Working on and off, however, has its limits. The rules are infinitely varied, subtle, and flexible, and, of course, they are always changing. Management, up to a certain level at least, is aware of the practice, and in some industries employs entire cadres of people to curtail or put an end to it. Simultaneously, the workers are subtly doing their best to keep it going, and to extend it wherever possible.

Every worker has a highly developed sense of how much work is expected of him. When he feels that the expectation is excessive, he tries to do something about it. This instinct has to do with the political nature of work itself, something every modern worker understands. The bosses want more from the worker than they are willing to give in return. The workers give work, and the bosses give money. The exchange is never quite equal, and the discrepancy is called profit. Since the bosses cannot do without profit, workers have an edge. A good worker in a key spot could, so long as he kept up production, take all the coffee breaks he wanted, and the bosses would

very likely look the other way. He could also choose to cut down on the coffee breaks, apply himself, and increase production, and then ask for and get more money. But that would be self-defeating, and he knows it. It would also place him in competition with other workers, which would be playing into the bosses' hands. What he would rather do is create some slack for himself and enjoy his job more.

At present on the West Coast, when a gang of longshoremen working on cargo start a shift, they often divide themselves into two equal groups and flip a coin. One group goes into the far reaches of the ship's hold and sits around. The other group starts loading cargo, usually working with a vengeance, since each one of them is doing the work of two men. An hour later, the groups change places. In other words, although my fellow longshoremen and I are getting paid for eight hours, on occasion we work only four. If someone reading this feels a swelling sense of moral outrage because we are sitting down on the job, I am sorry. I have searched my mind in vain for a polite way to tell that reader to go to hell.

If you *are* that reader, I would recommend that you abandon your outrage and begin thinking about doing something similar for yourself. You probably already have, even if you won't admit it. White-collar office workers, too, have come under criticism recently for robbing their bosses of their full-time services. Too much time is being spent around the Mr. Coffee machine, and some people (would you believe it?) have even been having personal conversations on company time. In fact, one office-system expert recently said that he had yet to encounter a business workplace that was functioning at more than about 60 percent efficiency.

Management often strives to set up a situation where work is done in series: a worker receives an article of manufacture, does something to it, and passes it on to another worker, who does something else to it and then passes it on to the next guy, and so on. The assembly line is a perfect example of this. Managers like this type of manufacture because it is more efficient—that is, it achieves more production. They also like it for another reason, even if they will not admit it: it makes it very difficult for the worker to do anything other than work.

Frederick W. Taylor, the efficiency expert who early in this century conducted the time-and-motion studies that led to the assembly-line process, tried to reduce workers to robots, all in the name of greater production. His staff of experts, each armed with clipboard and stopwatch, studied individual workers with a view toward eliminating unnecessary movement. Even ditchdigging could be made more efficient, they bragged, as if they had discovered something new in the world. Grasp the shovel, sink it into the earth with the arch of your boot for a good bite, and heave out the dirt. Then repeat the steps. Don't lean on that shovel between times! That's an unnecessary movement! The Taylorites soon found a great deal of opposition from some very tired workers. They discovered that the best shovelers were mentally retarded young men, who accepted directions readily and were less bored by repetitious acts. They got some pretty healthy shoveling done, but even they tended to goof off when a staff member wandered away.

Most people not directly engaged in daily work express disapproval when they hear of people working on and off. A studied campaign with carefully chosen language—"featherbedding," "a full day's work for a full day's pay," "taking a free ride"—has been pushed by certain employers to discredit the practice, and their success is such that I rarely discuss it except with other workers. My response is personal, and I feel no need to defend it: If I am getting a free ride, how come I am so tired when I go home at the end of a shift?

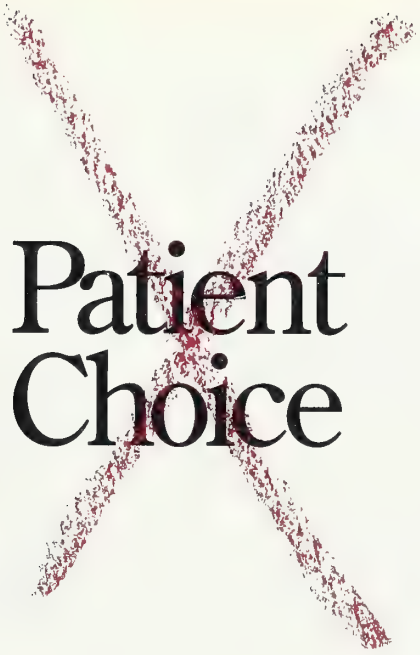
[Chat]

RICHARD RILEY'S BUSY, BUSY DAY

From an interview with Richard W. Riley, the secretary of education, in the September issue of Nickelodeon, *a magazine for children. The interview was conducted by Robin Sayers, a reporter for the magazine.*

ROBIN SAYERS: Do you doodle in Cabinet meetings?

RICHARD RILEY: Yes, I do. Actually, I usually write down ideas rather than doodle. But I'm good at stars. And I draw people—smiling people, usually. Sometimes I draw muscle-bound people. And I can draw a really good airplane, wings and all. When I was little, I used to draw airplanes all the time. I also draw boxes and then make them into three dimensions. I enjoy that.



Patient Choice

If you ignore it, maybe it will go away.

Today, most of us can choose the physicians who will provide our medical care, including, importantly, the surgeon who will perform any operation we may need. It's one way we can ensure that we'll have the best possible result from any medical procedure. But Americans may not have this choice much longer. Change is coming to our nation's health care system, and changes now under consideration could limit your right to consult with the qualified specialist of your choice.

At the American College of Surgeons, we support initiatives to improve health care. We believe maintaining patient choice is crucial to maintaining high standards of care. That's why we think you should be fully informed about *all* the implications these proposed changes could have on the care provided to you and your family.

While you may not have thought about patient choice before today, we know that the next time you or someone in your family needs an operation, you'll want to be able to choose a surgeon who has the best skills and experience to perform the procedure. Don't let your freedom to choose get away from you. Get the facts. Be informed.

I'm concerned about retaining the right of patient choice and want to learn more about this issue. Please send me a free copy of your brochure on patient choice and important information on surgical care.

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Dept. HM-5, 55 E. Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611



This photograph, by Valery Shekoldin, was taken in a Moscow school for mentally handicapped boys. It was on display in May at the C Kerk in Naarden, Holland, as part of Visions of Russia, *a show of contemporary work by Russian and Western photographers.*

[Notes]

ENDLESS LUV

From a collection of letters passed in class by high school students, compiled by Denis Wood, a professor of geography at Duke University and a former high school teacher. Since the 1960s, Wood has collected more than a thousand notes and letters from students around the country; his sources include colleagues, his children's friends, and his own students. The first set of letters below are from the 1964–65 school year; they were written by a Cleveland Heights, Ohio, junior high school girl named Diane to a classmate named Thomas. The second set is from the 1989–90 school year; the letters were written by a Raleigh, North Carolina, high school sophomore named Ann to a freshman named Mike.

1964–65

NOTES FROM DIANE TO THOMAS

Dear Thomas,

How you be? I've decided to take French next year. I won't get out of school until 4:00. I miss you, and I want to see you every day, even if it is for just a couple of minutes. This assembly is a big bore.

Have you got any reports on:

Queen Victoria?

Thomas Beckett?

Henry II?

Or any other monarchs of England? My term paper is going to be on one of them.

Well, gotta go.

Love ya,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

Today's my mother's birthday! Cool. Our older generation sure grows old fast. I'm so tired and lonely. I wanna see ya!!! I'm gonna walk right up to him, give him a great big kiss! That's what I feel like doing every time I see you.

Someday I will, right in public, in front of everyone, so that they can see who the one I love is. I want everyone to know.

Forever Yours,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

Have you heard the news? My so-called mother is about to take over my phone calls. I wonder what she'll think of next. She's trying to train me, but she can't seem to do it. You see, she couldn't take care of us earlier because of the store. But now that she isn't working anymore, she's trying to tame us down. So please understand if I can't see you at times. The only times I could see you during the week is if:

1. Immediately after school I could say I had special help.
2. I go to the library.
3. I mail some letters.
4. I go out for the paper.

Next month there is going to be a club party held at my house, so my mom will be terribly busy and I could sneak out for the night. As for weekends, I'll tell her the truth. Example: I have a date at 7:30 with a nice gentleman to go to the movies. May I go?

I could go on writing to you forever, but I'm afraid there isn't that much paper in the world. Au voir.

S.W.A.K.,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

Happy New Year! I hope that we make '65 a good year. The most thing I want out of the year is for you and I to stay together and not let a thing come between us! I want you to have my I.D. It isn't much, but take it anyway, even though I didn't get your poem.

Please don't let anything happen to us. I've run out of words.

Thinking of you always,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

I was glad you called. But now I'm worried because you sounded mad on the phone. Thursday was one of the happiest days of my life! Here are some things I want you to know:

1. I love you!
2. I miss you.
3. Can't stop thinking of you!
4. I trust you and will always be true to you!
5. A pleasure knowing you.
6. You're intelligent, cute, sweet, thoughtful, understanding, polite, faithful, etc.
7. You're everything a girl could ever want in a boy!
8. You're cool, neat, tough!
9. Professional businessman, which I really dig!

I really am sick, both mentally and physically. Physically—tired, cold, weak, headache. Mentally—I have a love fever! I pray to "god" that there will be no separation ever again between us! You're the absolute most for me. I love you, Thomas.

Love ya,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

I just want you to know that there's nothing between Ronnie and myself. I too couldn't be happier in my present situation. I also want you to know that Billy or any other boy could never, ever take me away from you. I'm glad you didn't hurt that guy.

Remember you said we should pick a song we both like and make it our song? Here's the ones I like:

1. "Dusty" by the Ragdolls
2. "Downtown" by Petula Clark
3. "I Feel Fine" by the Beatles
4. "Before and After" by the Fleetwings
5. "See About Me" by the Supremes
6. "All Day, All Night" by the Kinks

These are all I can think of at the moment.

Thinking of You,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

I want ya to know one thing about tonight. I'll be thinking of you all during the party. I'll probably regret this, but just to make you happy I'll go. Like I said before: I'll do anything you ask me to, or at least I'll try to.

My mom told me that I've changed so much since I've hung around with the Rat Pack. She said that if I don't get to be myself again, something bad will happen. She's made three threats already. That's life!

Well, gotta go.

Bye,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

My mother and I haven't been getting along too well together lately. I can't say or ask her anything without having a fight. She keeps insisting that I'm always up to something. I've tried and tried to talk to her and do things with her like I used to, but I'm not succeeding.

Now that you know all about my biggest problem of the year, I want to tell you about my *happiest* experience. You! You're my happiest experience! Just don't believe any rumors or stories you hear. You're my guy and always will be. I can wait for 1969 or 1970 or even longer. You could be drafted by 18. If you are, I'll still wait.

Just remember that dreams do come true if you wish and pray hard enough.

Love always,
Diane

Dear Thomas,

I have just compared your other letters with your last one. Very interesting.

I wish you'd make up your "I" mind about me. Just what do you want me to do? Ever since last Monday when our "New Life" began I've been telling the absolute, goddamn, honest-to-goodness truth. You're making me very angry.

I'm now known not only as a liar, a two-face, and a hypocrite but also a flirt. So I flirt, do I? I wonder what you'll think of next. I have no interest in Billy or Bob *what-so-ever!* You're the only one for me, and as far as I know, you always will be.

Go ahead and listen to the other kids. Go ahead. But you won't get any further with me. It gets real bad when a guy can't trust his gal.

As far as I'm concerned, you're the nicest boy I've ever met in my world history! If this letter doesn't explain everything, I don't know what will.

Diane

Dear Thomas,

Before I say anything else, I want you to know that I still love you and care just as much as I always have. Believe it or not, it's *true*.

No one has brainwashed me or done anything of that sort. You have changed a great deal since we've broken up. Before I go on, I'd like to tell you more about how I feel.

1. I feel that you are using me.

2. You've changed so much.

3. You don't love me as much as you say you do, anymore.

4. I'm going to leave the Rat Pack. It's the best thing.

5. Just tell the gang that I'm not afraid of them or you. As I said before, I don't scare easy.

6. You told me you lie. Well, that's part of love. You trust and have faith in the one you care for. Thus, I trust and have faith in you.

You see, I can't help what I feel. I surely hope you understand me the way I've learned to understand you in our wonderful friendship.

Diane

[Epiphany]

ANOTHER VOTE FOR SCHOOL REFORM

From a letter to the editor in the August issue of Thrasher, *a monthly about skateboarding.*

To the editor:

All right, call me a dumbfuck, but I just found out the other day that Washington, D.C., isn't in the state of Washington. The sad thing is that I am eighteen and never knew this. I passed government and geography—how I made it through without knowing this, I don't know. I've read stories in *Thrasher* on D.C. skaters and skate spots too. I found out where it was by looking for it on this U.S. map. I just want to say fuck everyone for never telling me, and I think you should print this because I don't want this to happen to anyone else.

D.C. Dumbass
Westminster, CA

1989–90

NOTES FROM ANN TO MIKE

12-13-89

Mike,

Hey! 'Sup? Nothing much here. My friend Melissa wants to know if you like me as a friend or a girlfriend. Do you smoke? I do sometimes, but I can usually stop. What are you going to do this weekend?

Luv ya!
Ann

12-14-89

Mike,

Hey Babe! 'Sup? Nothin' much here. I'm sitting in second period thinking about you. I am sorry that I ignored you last night on the phone. I was watching MTV. If you can, call me tonight. But if you cannot call me, that's okay with me.

Last night I went to bed at 10:00 P.M. but I didn't fall asleep until 12:45 A.M. I was thinking about you the whole time.

Love ya always,
Ann

P.S. If you love me, let me know. And write me back!

12-15-89

Mike,

When I got home yesterday from school, I was thinking about you. Even on the bus, I was thinking about you. I like you a whole lot. In my opinion you are nice. You are not mean. You are gorgeous, good-looking to me. I wish I had lunch with you. Maybe next year we will have lunch together. I will be in the eleventh grade next year. Just think, you will be an eleventh grader when I am a twelfth grader. I will invite you to my graduation.

You can call me at my sister's house on Sunday. My mother is having an office Christmas



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When you put on a Lands' End Pinpoint, you notice right away how silky smooth it feels.

That comes from the extremely tight weave of our Oxford fabric – a weave that wouldn't be possible without a very fine cotton yarn.

Now, we're not just spinning a yarn when we tell you that ours *is* very fine. It's what shirtmakers call an 80's 2-ply yarn.

And actually, it takes *more than* 12 miles of it to make one of our Pinpoints –12 miles, 946 feet, to be exact.

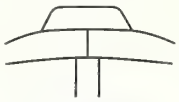
Some off-the-cuff remarks.

These beauties are made with the kind of Old World tailoring you don't find much anymore, even in the Old World.

Each one takes 69 different sewing steps, for example.

The shoulders have an authentic, English-style split back yoke. Which simply means the yoke – the part that goes over the shoulders – is cut in four, then sewn back together. This allows it to *g-i-v-e* a little when you move.

You can also pat us on the back for the full box pleat on the back. It opens up when you reach across a table. So the shirt feels roomier.



The yoke is split – and that's no yoke.

We're even fussy about our buttons. They're classified as "super durable" in the trade. (Only 62 buttons in the whole world are.) And our buttonholes are just as durable; each is edged with 120 lock stitches, so it won't fray.

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Maybe you can find Pinpoints with quality like ours at those snooty men's stores. But we doubt you'll find anything like our prices.

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party at my home, and I don't know what time the party ends. I will let you know what time I will be home Sunday night. I live on Fairfax Drive, which is off Lastner Lane. Do you know where that new road is? If you know where the tornado hit the K-mart, then I live right behind it. It's hard to explain.

Love ya always,
Ann

1-4-90

Mike,

Hey Babe! I love you so much! Can I borrow your jacket until sixth period? You know that you and I need to get away sometime. I love you. And it's not for your body. It's for your good looks. I will not date anybody else because I love you more than you can say. Do you like crabmeat?

Love U,
Ann

1-8-90

Mike,

Hey Babe! I am sorry if I was a bitch on the phone yesterday. I really do want you to spend time with me this weekend. Friday night we can go to the mall and get our picture taken together and then we can kiss and hug. I need to move or get away from my parents. They are bothering me. My dad was saying, "Why don't you watch your TV? And why don't you leave mom and I alone?" I will tell you the rest of it later. You are the only one who I can talk to and tell you my problems. I need you really, really, really, really, really bad.

Love ya always and 4 eternity,
Ann

1-8-90

Mike,

Hey Babe! I need to talk to you. It is very important. When can we get together? I love you so much. I will tell you what is important when you call me. We need to talk about us having sex and having children.

Love ya always,
Ann

1-9-90

Mike,

Hey! I am going to try to go to the doctor today. I need to tell you something about what's going to happen. I love you so much. You mean a lot to me. But I do need your support. I need to see you. When can we get together?

Love ya always,
Ann

1-10-90

Mike,

I had a very, very good dream last night. I dreamed that my parents let you spend the night. And they let you sleep in my room and in my bed with me. You and I watched TV and you told me that your back was hurting. So I used a massager on your back. And we had sex while my parents were gone.

Love ya always,
Ann

1-11-90

Mike,

My brain was messed up last night because I was thinking about you. We need to talk about us, okay? Do you really want a baby? My future plan is going to be with you. I'm not going anywhere until you graduate. I am going to stay right here in town. After you graduate we can live together. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. How do I look in my new dress?

Love ya always,
Ann

1-23-90

Hey Babe!

Two months is a long time. I hope we make it through a year!!! I love you so damn much. I will see you after sixth period at my locker! And I will see you after school!!! I care about U!!!

Love your wife,
Ann

[Rules]

GIRL TALK, BY THE BOOK

From an internal memorandum sent in May to editors at Seventeen *by April Bernard, the magazine's copy chief. The memo lists amendments to the magazine's copyediting rules.*

Beginning with the August issue, we will:

- Use the following prefixes and suffixes without hyphens: *mega-*, *super-*, *alterna-*, *-wear*, *-like*.
- Style these *Seventeen* staples as follows: *bad hair day*, *yea* (not *yay*), *cholesterol-free*, *fat-free*, *boyz* (as a parallel to *grrrls*).
- Bid adieu to the word *cuz*—always use *'cause*. The same for *ohmigawd*—use either *oh, my God* or *ohmigod*.



"Bloodline: The Big Family 1995," by Zhang Xiaogang, on display this month at the Giardini and Palazzo Grassi in Venice, as part of the Venice Biennale. According to the catalogue that accompanies the artist's Biennale exhibit, Zhang's portraits reflect "images of the mass-man today"; the figures above represent "the Revolutionary Family, in which all members are brothers and sisters." Zhang lives in Chongquing, China.

[Story]

HOMAGE

By Nadine Gordimer. From the premiere issue of DoubleTake, *a quarterly published by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. Gordimer is the author, most recently, of the novel* None to Accompany Me.

Read my lips.

Because I don't speak. You're sitting there, and when the train lurches, you seem to bend forward to hear. But I don't speak.

If I could find them I could ask for the other half of the money I was going to get when I'd done it, but they're gone. I don't know where to look. I don't think they're here, anymore, they're in some other country, they move all the time and that's how they find men like me. We leave home because of governments overthrown, a conscript on the wrong side; no work, no bread or oil in the shops, and when we cross a border we're put over another border, and another. What is your final destination? We don't know; we don't know where we can stay, where we won't be sent on somewhere else, from one tent camp to another in a country where you can't get papers.

I don't ever speak.

They find us there, in one of these places—they found me and they saved me, they can do anything, they got me in here with papers and a name they gave me; I buried my name, no one will ever dig it out of me. They told me what they wanted done and they paid me half the money right away. I ate and I had clothes to wear and I had a room in a hotel where people read the menu outside three different restaurants before deciding where to have their meal. There was free shampoo in the bathroom and the key to a private safe where liquor was kept instead of money.

They had prepared everything for me. They had followed him for months and they knew when he went where, at what time—although he was such an important man, he would go out privately with his wife, without his state

bodyguards, because he liked to pretend to be an ordinary person or he wanted to be an ordinary person. They knew he didn't understand that that was impossible for him, and that made it possible for them to pay me to do what they paid me to do.

I am nobody; no country counts me in its census, the name they gave me doesn't exist: nobody did what was done. He took time off, with his wife by the arm, to a restaurant with double doors to keep out the cold, the one they went to week after week, and afterwards, although I'd been told they always went home, they turned in to a cinema. I waited. I had one beer in a bar, that's all, and I came back. People coming out of the cinema didn't show they recognized him because people in this country like to let their leaders be ordinary. He took his wife, like any ordinary citizen, to that corner where the entrance goes down to the subway trains, and as he stood back to let her pass ahead of him I did it. I did it just as they paid me to, as they tested my marksmanship for, right in the back of the skull. As he fell and as I turned to run, I did it again, as they paid me to, to make sure.

She made the mistake of dropping on her knees to him before she looked up to see who had done it. All she could tell the police, the papers, and the inquiry was that she saw the back of a man in dark clothing, a leather jacket, leaping up the flight of steps that leads from the side street. This particular city is one of steep rises and dark alleys. She never saw my face. Years later now (I read in the papers) she keeps telling people how she never saw the face, she never saw the face of the one who did it, if only she had looked up seconds sooner—they would have been able to find me, the nobody who did it would have become me. She thinks all the time about the back of my head in the dark cap (it was not dark, really, it was a light green-and-brown check, an expensive cap I'd bought with the money, afterwards I threw it in the canal with a stone in it). She thinks of my neck, the bit of my neck she could have seen between the cap and the collar of the leather jacket (I couldn't throw that in the canal, I had it dyed). She thinks of the shine of the leather jacket across my shoulders under the puddle of light from a streetlamp that stands at the top of the flight, and my legs moving so fast I disappear while she screams.

The police arrested a drug pusher they picked up in the alley at the top of the steps. She couldn't say whether or not it was him because she had no face to remember. The same with others the police raked in from the streets and from those with criminal records and political grievances; no face. So I had nothing to fear. All the time I was being pushed out of one country into another, I was afraid, afraid of having no papers, afraid of being questioned, afraid of being hungry, but now I had nothing to be afraid of. I still have nothing to fear. I don't speak.

I search the papers for whatever is written about what was done; the inquiry doesn't close, the police, the people, this whole country keep on searching. I read all the theories; sometimes, like now, in the subway train, I make out on the back of someone's newspaper a new one. An Iranian plot, because of this country's hostility toward some government there. A South African attempt to revenge this country's sanctions against some racist government there, at the time. I could tell who did it, but not why. When they paid me the first half of the money—just like that, right away!—they didn't tell me and I didn't ask. Why should I ask; what government, on any side, anywhere, would take me in? They were the only people to offer me anything.

And then I got only half what they promised. And there isn't much left after five years—five years next month. I've done some sort of work, now and then, so no one would be wondering where I got the money to pay the rent for my room and so on. Worked at the racecourse, and once or twice in nightclubs. Places where they don't register you with any labour office. What was I thinking I was going to do with the money if I had got it all, as they promised? Get away, somewhere else? When I think of going to some other country, like they did, taking out at the frontier the papers and the name of nobody they gave me, showing my face—

I don't talk.

I don't take up with anybody. Not even a woman. Those places I worked, I would get offers to do things, move stolen goods, handle drugs: people seemed to smell out somehow I'd made myself available. But I am not! I am not here, in this city. This city has never seen my face, only the back of a man leaping up the steps that led to the alley near the subway station. It's said, I know, that you return to the scene of what you did. I never go near, I never walk past that subway station. I've never been back to those steps. When she screamed after me as I disappeared, I disappeared forever.

I couldn't believe it when I read that they were not going to bury him in a cemetery. They put him in the bit of public garden in front of the church that's near the subway station. It's an ordinary-looking place with a few old trees dripping in the rain on gravel paths, right on a main street. There's an engraved stone and a low railing, that's all. And people come in their lunch hour, people come while

00 MHz breakthrough!

New technology launches wireless speaker revolution...

ecoton develops breakthrough technology hich transmits stereo sound through walls, ilings and floors up to 150 feet.



Breakthrough wireless speaker design blankets your home with music.



f you had to name just one new product "the most innovative of the ear," what would you oose? Well, at the recent *International nsumer Electronics Show*, critics gave Recoton's w wireless stereo speaker system the *Design d Engineering Award* r being the "most in- ovative and outstand- g new product."

Recoton was able to troduce this whole ew generation of owerful wireless eakers due to the lvent of 900 MHz tech- ology. This newly ap- oved breakthrough ables Recoton's wire- ss speakers to rival the ound of expensive ired speakers.

ecently approved chnology. In June 1989, the *Federal ommunications Com- ission* allocated a and of radio frequen- es stretching from 902 928 MHz for wireless, -home product ap- ications. Recoton, one f the world's leading wireless speaker man- facturers, took advantage of the FCC ruling y creating and introducing a new speaker ystem that utilizes the recently approved fre- uency band to transmit clearer, stronger ereo signals throughout your home.

Crystal-clear sound anywhere. Just imagine listening to your stereo, TV, VCR or CD player in any room of your home—without running miles of speaker wire. Plus, you'll never have to worry about range because the new 900 MHz technology allows stereo signals to travel distances of up to 150 feet through walls, ceilings and floors without losing sound quality.

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Recoton gives you the freedom to listen to music wherever you want. Your music is no longer limited to the room your stereo is in. With the wireless headphones you can listen to your TV, stereo or CD player while you move freely between rooms, exercise or do other activities. And unlike infrared headphones, you don't have to be in a line-of-sight with the transmitter, giving you a full 150 foot range.

The headphones and speakers have their own built-in receiver, so no wires are needed between you and your stereo. One transmitter operates an unlimited number of speakers and headphones.



Recoton's transmitter sends music through walls to wireless speakers over a 70,000 square foot area.

A single transmitter, unlimited receivers. The powerful transmitter plugs into an audio-out, tape-out or headphone jack on your stereo or TV component, transmitting wirelessly to speakers or headphones. The speakers plug into an outlet. One transmitter broadcasts to an unlimited number of stereo speakers and headphones. And since each speaker contains its own built-in receiver/amplifier, there are no wires running from the stereo to the speakers.

Full dynamic range. The speaker, mounted in a bookshelf-sized acoustically constructed cabinet, provides a two-way bass reflex design for individual bass boost control. Full dynamic range is achieved by the use of a 2" tweeter and 4" woofer. Plus, automatic digital lock-in tuning guarantees optimum reception and eliminates drift. The new technology provides static-free sound in virtually any environment. The speakers are also self-amplified; they can't be blown out no matter what your stereo's wattage.

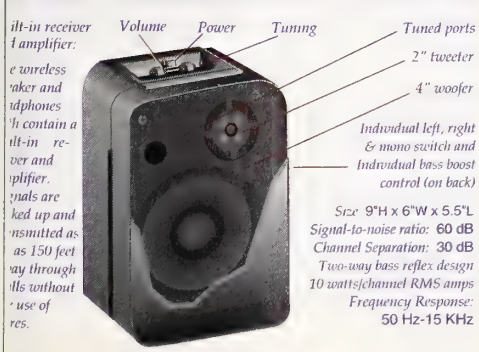
Stereo or hi-fi, you decide. These speakers have the option of either stereo or hi-fi sound. Use two speakers (one set on right channel and the other on left) for full stereo separation. Or, if you just want to add an extra speaker to a room, set it on mono and listen to both channels on one speaker. Mono combines both left and right channels for hi-fi sound. This option lets you put a pair of speakers in the den and get full stereo separation or put one speaker in the kitchen for hi-fi sound.

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Nearby, out shopping, people come up out of that subway, out of that cinema, and they tramp over the gravel to go and stand there, where he is. They put flowers down.

I've been there. I've seen. I don't keep away. It's a place like any other place, to me. Every time I go there, following the others over the crunch of feet on the path, I see even young people weeping, they put down their flowers and sometimes sheets of paper with what looks like lines of poems written there (I can't read this language well), and I see that the inquiry goes on, it will not end until they find the face, until the back of nobody turns around. All that will never happen. Now I do what the others do. It's the way to be safe, perfectly safe. Today I bought a cheap bunch of red roses held by an elastic band wound tight between their crushed leaves and wet thorns, and laid it there, before the engraved stone, behind the low railing, where my name is buried with him.

[Poem]

THE RURAL DREAM

"Dreaming of Rural America," by Linda Pastan, in the Summer issue of The Georgia Review. *Pastan's most recent book is* An Early Afterlife.

Dreaming of rural America,
I want to unbuild my city
brick by brick, dismantling
sidewalks and smokestacks
and subways. I want
to rush to the airport
where planes line up at their gates
like cows at their stalls for milking.
And taking the first plane out,
I want to enter the ticking heart
of the country and in a rented car
drive for miles past fields scored
with the history of wind; past
silos, those inland lighthouses
in which corn smolders to golden dust.
I want an RD number and a tin mailbox
filled with flowers instead of letters.
I want to bathe in a porcelain tub
under a ceiling sloping towards heaven
where farmyard smells drift
through the window like notes
of pungent country music.
And when I am scrubbed clean,
let a child who has searched
the barn for the perfect egg
offer it to me on her open palm
as if it were the gift of a jewel
on a velvet cushion. In the dream
of rural America, farmers have lost
the knack of despair. They do not
breathe diesel fumes of whiskey
into the faces of their women.
They do not wield their leather belts
to erase, on the backs of their sons,
the old stigmata of failure.
And on frozen nights no daughter,
dreaming of cities, leans
out of her window to cast wishes
heavy as iron horseshoes towards
the prong of an impossible star.

[Reflection]

SAVED

From a series of vignettes by Botho Strauss, a German playwright and novelist, in Conjunctions *number 23, a special issue on "new world writing." The vignettes originally appeared in* Pairs, Passersby, *a collection of Strauss's essays published by Carl Hanser Verlag in Munich. Translated from the German by John Zilcosky.*

I'll hear it for a long time to come: the cries of the woman who wanted to throw herself from the top floor of an apartment building. At first, a steady, muffled shouting established itself slowly above the congested street noise and drifted toward me. The apartment building bordered directly on the house where I was staying, so I couldn't observe the jumper herself, only the expectant circle that formed in front of her solitary perch. The apartment building measures maybe fifty feet to its roof, and it seemed questionable whether a jump from such a low height would necessarily result in death—more likely, just in the most horrible injuries. Her shouts increased in volume, she was now screaming very loudly, plaintively, almost joyfully: "Help! . . . Help!" Queen of desperate straits, she gathered little by little a small nation, subjects of her reign of suffering, at her feet. The employees in the offices diagonally opposite the building leapt up from their desks and, pushing and shoving against the many windows, rolled their eyes upward. But the vacillating monarch on the window ledge didn't keep her people in suspense for long, for already the police and fire trucks appeared. At the approaching sirens—and here this word wavers, back and forth, between its old meaning, the song of se-



'Laramie History Professor" and "Home for the High Holy Days," from Fringe of the Diaspora: The Jews of Wyoming, *a series of photographs by Penny Wolin. Wolin, who grew up in Cheyenne, conceived the series as a "paradigm for the American Jewish experience, leavened with a unique Western view." Wolin's photographs were on display this summer at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia.*

duction from the depths, and its present one, the rescue alarm—the woman screamed more and more vehemently, more and more plaintively: "Help . . . Help," and "Now listen to me!" But she had absolutely nothing to add, only "Help, Help" once again. The firemen unrolled their safety net; six of them held it stretched out below the window. But they never really took a good look up, watching instead the crowd of faces gawking skyward and taking pleasure in every glance that happened to linger on their accomplished grips or their poised, sturdy physiques. They performed their duty and scanned the scene. But they knew she wouldn't come. After taking a fleeting but experienced look at the posture and gestures of the candidate, the men obviously knew that this would not be the scene of a jump. And they were right; a little later she—a young woman, incidentally, her forehead crossed with brilliant strands of blonde hair—left escorted by the police. Strapped to a stretcher, she was towed out of the building and shoved into an ambulance. Saved.

We saw her again in the evening. This edition of the television news introduces us to people who have just survived suicide attempts. We are present when those poisoned with sleeping pills awaken; we live through every second, as their eyes open to a new existence before the television cameras.

The impression we get from the saved is generally disappointing. Describing their condition before the great passage, they are at a loss for words or they talk nonsense. Strange, also, how they take in their surroundings without surprise: they seem to be immediately aware that they are in a hospital bed and not in the realm of the dead. Some go first to the sink to brush their teeth. The young woman who wanted to throw herself from the window of the apartment building now tells the television crew: "Peter, he's crazy jealous. I didn't have no idea where I was. I didn't have no choice." Expressed that way, her lofty cry from the morning, her will to carry out the one, final, supreme human act, seems suddenly effaced by all too understandable, and thus meaningless, motives. And yet: the real misery is that real misery cannot make a space for itself. It stifles awareness, it doesn't break out. The great sorrow is housed inside the thousands of meaningless sorries. ■



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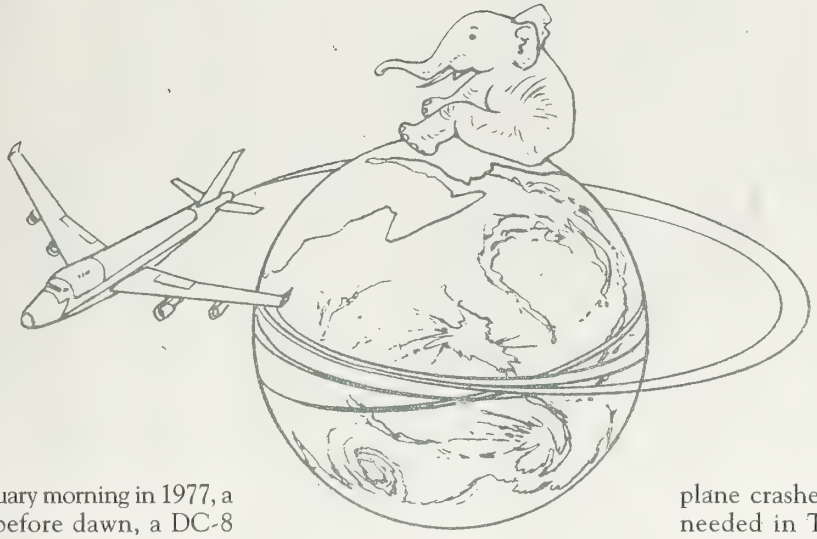
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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY

ON THE WINGS OF COMMERCE

Penguins and lipstick, strawberries and gold—aloft

BY BARRY LOPEZ



ne foggy January morning in 1977, a few hours before dawn, a DC-8 eighter crashed on takeoff at Anchor- e International Airport, killing the five ople aboard and fifty-six head of cattle bound for Tokyo. escuers found the white-faced Herefords flung in heaps rough the thick, snowy woods, their bone-punctured bod- s, dimly lit by kerosene fires, steaming in the chill air.

A few days after the accident I happened to land in nchorage on a flight from Seattle, en route to Fair- nks. The grisly sight of the wreck and the long scar pped through birch trees off the end of the runway ade me philosophical about flying. Beyond the vio- nt loss of human life, it was some element of inno- nce in the cattle I kept coming back to. Were they st standing there calmly in large metal pens when the plane crashed? And why were they needed in Tokyo? At 35,000 feet over the winter Pacific, cruising that frigid altitude at 400 knots, did their lowing and jostle seem as bucolic?

Like many people who fly often, I have watched dozens of windowless airfreighters lumbering by on taxiways and have wondered at their cargos. In the years after that accident I puzzled over them everywhere—in Quito, in Beijing, in Nairobi, in Frankfurt, in Edmonton. What could warrant such an endless fleet of machines so sophisticated and expensive? It must be more than plasma and vaccines they haul, materials desperately needed; more than cut flowers, gold, and fruit, things highly valued or perishable. Could it be simply the objects people most desire? A fresh strawberry on a winter morning in Toronto?

Barry Lopez is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His most recent book is* Field Notes, *a collection of stories, published by Knopf.*

ustrations by Istvan Banyai

Watching pallets go aboard on monotonously similar tarmacs around the world, I became more and more curious. I wanted to know what the world craved. I wanted a clarifying annotation of the rag-doll scatter of cattle.

At 2:00 A.M. one night last December, I climbed aboard a 747 freighter in Chicago to begin a series of flights around the world with freight.[1] I would fly in and out of cities like Taipei, Rotterdam, and Los Angeles with drill pipe, pistol targets, frozen ostrich meat, lace teddies, dog food, digital tape machines, pythons, and ball caps; with tangerines from Johannesburg, gold bullion from the Argentine, and orchid clusters from Bangkok. During the hourless penetration of space between continents, I would sidle among the eighty or more tons of airborne freight on the main deck, examining disparate labels like an inquiring bird. Out cockpit windows, I would become absorbed in the sprawling stillness of the earth.

BOEING'S ASSEMBLY BUILDING IS SO LARGE IT IS SAID TO HAVE ITS OWN WEATHER

Before I boarded the first flight, however, I wanted to examine the plane.

The assembly building at Boeing's aircraft plant at Everett, Washington, is so large—ninety-eight acres under a single roof more than a hundred feet above the ground—that it is said to have its own weather. Sometimes low clouds form in steelwork near the ceiling, where gantry cranes carrying subassembled sections of 747s, 767s, and 777s glide toward final assembly sites. Over a single November night I watched swing-shift and third-shift crews at the plant complete the assembly of a 747-400 freighter, nearly the largest plane ever to fly. I studied it, and listened and touched, as its 68,000-pound wings were joined to a fuselage section, the six fuselage sections slid together, and landing gear attached beneath, leaving it to tower above its workers, empty as a cathedral, aloof as the moon.

When I was a boy I raised tumbler pigeons, a breed that at some height above the ground destroys its aerodynamic lift and comes plummeting down like a feathered stone, only to pull out at the very last moment in a terrifyi demonstration of power and grace. Model ai planes hung by black thread from the ceiling my bedroom; I was mesmerized by the win seething in eucalyptus trees around our hous once I jumped from the roof with an ope umbrella.

At seventeen I entered college as an aer nautical engineer, only to discover that it w the metaphors of flight, not its mechanics, th moved me. I was less interested in engineeri than in the imagination of Antoine de Sain Exupéry, who wrote of the "tender muslin the meadows, the rich tweed of the wood who climbed into the open cockpit of Sahara-bound mail plane with his tool bag a heavy clothes like a deep-sea diver. I switch to Arts and Letters, but the marvel of flig never diminished for me, and the exotic allu of the earth continued to tug. I pictured t skies as a landscape of winds—West Afric *harmattan*, Greece's damp *Apeliotes*, Califo nia's Santa Ana, Japan's *Daiboufu* ("the wi that knocks horses down").

That night in the Boeing assembly buildin admired what I saw come tangibly together staggering achievement in engineering, met lurgy, and economy of design. The physical sembly of a 747-400 freighter—232 feet lo 165 tons poised over eighteen tires like a ba foot gymnast on a balance beam, a six-story dr from the apex of its tail—suggests the assem of a chronometer by tweezer, a sculptor's mea ing with a jeweler's fastidiousness. Standing scaffolding inside a wheel well, I marveled a set of brass-colored steel screws securing h draulic lines in a pattern as neat as a musi staff. Not a tool mark, not a misstep was to seen. (Elsewhere, workers were buffing t plane's aluminum skin to remove scratche couldn't find with the pad of my finger.) Fu lage sections came together smooth as a cap sl ing onto a French fountain pen.

For twelve or thirteen hours that nigh watched, wandering off occasionally to through a box of buttonhead rivets (three m lion of the plane's six million parts are fast ers), or to observe agile men disappearing i the recesses of another 747's unfinished wing to heft "nuclear hardened" cable—flexib shielded conduit that carries thick bundles color-coded wire from the controls on the fli deck to each engine. Then I circled back to freighter—this particular 747-400 being built Singapore Airlines—with another bit of unc standing, a new appreciation of its elegan People who saw the 747's first flight, in 19 were impressed that something so huge co fly. What surprised the pilots were its nimb ness, its fluid response to their foot and h

[1] *The forty flights, covering about 110,000 nautical miles, were made aboard 747 freighters or 747 passenger planes hauling substantial amounts of cargo in their lower-deck compartments or on the aft portion of their main decks, separated from the passengers by a bulkhead. The flights were arranged by Northwest Airlines in the United States and the Far East, and by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines in India, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and South America. Both airlines provided cockpit clearance, which permitted me to ride with the pilots.*

ntrols, and the easy way the aircraft absorbed rbulence.

The Boeing 747 is the one airplane every na-onal airline strives to include in its fleet as nfirmation of its place in modern commerce, nd it's tempting to see it as the ultimate em-diment of what our age stands for. Superficial-, it represents an apotheosis in structural engi-eering, the applied use of exotic metals and lastics. Its avionics and electronics systems in-rporate all the speed and efficiency of modern mmunications, and in terms of manufacturing nd large-scale corporate organization, the swift ssembly of its millions of parts is a model of reamlining and integration. In action, the ob-ct itself is a virtuoso solution to flight, to carus's dream of escape and freedom. It operates ith as little regard for geography, weather, po-tical boundaries, intimidating physical dis-nce, and time as anything humans have ever evised. If the sophistication of the plane's me-hanics was beyond my understanding, the spare race of its lines was not, nor its ability to navi-ate and to communicate over any quarter of ie planet's surface in almost any sort of weath-. (The plane's only enemy, I was told, is rogue inds—the inevitable riptides and flash floods the troposphere.)

When I measured out the freighter's nearly com-pleted main deck that night—sixty-eight aces down the bare interior—I was thinking of ie quintessential symbol of another era: the othic cathedral of twelfth-century Europe, and its emptiness, which we once filled with religious elief. Standing on the main deck, over the stub at joins the wing roots, where "nave" meets ransept," and looking up toward the pilots' hancel," I recalled the intention behind Lucio osta's Brasília, a fresh city, aligned east and west ke a cathedral but laid out in the shape of an air-ane. But there in the hangar, the issue of spiri-ality, as serious a consideration as blood in the eins of a people, was too vague. The machine was agnificent, beautiful as staggered light on water, mplex as an insoluble murmur of quadratic uations. But what, placed within it, could com-are to religious faith?

In the assembly building that night, the 747 me together so quickly that to be away even r half an hour meant missing lines in a sketch at soon became a painting. I would stand in ie place, then another amid the cocoon of jigs, adles, floor jacks, elevated walkways, and web ings surrounding the plane, watching while ams of men, some with ponytails and tattoos, lished off a task neat as a snap of dry fingers in w motion. They were glad for the work. They ew it could disappear in a trice, depending on the banks, the market, or a lone securities trader in Singapore.[2]

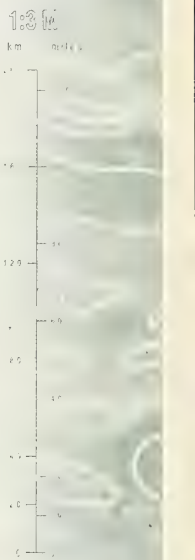
An aircraft will give away some of its character to a slow walkabout. If you stare nose-on at a 747, you can tell whether the plane is fueled by the angle at which the wings sag. This vertical flexibility partly explains the sensation of unperturbed agility one feels as a passenger. If you let your eye run to the tip of either wing, you can see another key: a slight horizontal twist apparent in the last thirty feet or so—an engineer's quick, intuitive solution to damping a troublesome oscillation. A similar intuition once compelled Wilbur Wright to warp the leading edge of the wings on an experimental glider, lending it critical lateral stability. The glider metamorphosed into *Flyer,* in which, on December 17, 1903, at Kill Devil Hills on the North Carolina coast, Orville Wright achieved powered, sustained, controllable flight for the first time.

That flight carried him about half the length of a 747-400 freighter's main deck. He was airborne for twelve seconds in a craft stripped of all excess weight. The plane I was standing under can carry 122 tons 50,000 nautical miles in ten hours. The Wrights had little inkling of commercial advantage; the 747 freighter, without the support of government subsidies for initial research and development, without the promise of private profit, without corporations competing fiercely for a share in the marketplace, without a continuous turnover in all that is considered fashionable in consumer goods, might very easily have gotten no further than a draftsman's table.

Yet my last impression of the plane, the rainy morning I drove away from the assembly building, was of accomplishment. Whatever people might do with it, however they might fill this empty vessel, it gleamed, to my way of thinking, as an ideal. It was an exquisite reification of the desire for beauty.

Sometime later, I returned to Everett to inspect the finished cockpit. I wanted to crawl into every space that would admit me: low, tight bays on either side of the nosewheel doghouse that hold tiers of maintenance computers; the transverse avionics bay aft of them, where the plane's triple-redundant inertial navigation sys-

[2] *As a singular icon the 747 also symbolizes huge economic risk, brutal financial efficiency, and despotic corporate ego. Boeing president William Allen and Pan American's Juan Trippe dared each other to take the then mind-boggling steps of contracting for and building the 747. Who would go first? In 1969, when Boeing's total debt after developing the plane was thought to be larger than its net worth, it eliminated 60,000 jobs to save the company, pushing Seattle's unemployment to 17 percent.*



tem and flight-deck computers are located (and from where, through separate hatches, one can either drop to the tarmac below or emerge on the main deck above). I wanted to orient myself among banks of Halon bottles (the firefighting system) and emergency oxygen tanks on the lower cargo deck. I wanted to enter the compartment aft of the rear pressure bulkhead and see the massive jackscrew that tilts the horizontal stabilizer (the fins that protrude from a plane's tail).

Once the plane was fitted with its four Pratt & Whitney engines—each developing up to 56,000 pounds of thrust (about 21,000 horsepower)—Singapore Airlines would take it away. At something like $155 million, it was an enormous capital investment. But with an international airfreight market currently expanding at about three times the rate of the passenger market, Boeing's plane number RR835 would soon pay for itself. After which, grossing upward of $750,000 per load against an operating cost of roughly $15,000 per hour, it would begin to earn its owners a substantial and unencumbered return.

After the Frankfurt airport and London's Heathrow, Amsterdam's Schiphol International Airport is Europe's largest airfreight depot site. KLM's operation at Schiphol is efficient and organized—dangerous goods here, live animals there, valuables (jewelry, currency, silver bars, uncut gemstones) over here, drugs in yet another place. In this world, "perishable" refers to more than flowers, food, and newspapers; it includes everything in tenuous fashion: watches, video games, shades of lipstick, a cut of trouser—objects for which a few days' head start on store shelves is crucial.

On an upper half-floor of the cavernous outbound-freight building—the main floor includes an open space perhaps 600 by 200 feet and 40 feet high—there is no one, only automated loading equipment, enslaved by a computerized sorting program that is updated continuously in response to aircraft schedule changes and new delivery priorities. The loaders, moving on floor tracks, pull standard-size pallets and cargo containers from steel shelves at just the right moment to launch them on paths terminating promptly at the cargo doors of their intended airplane. It is stark, bloodless work. On the main floor the tedium is relieved in three ways: in the buildup of single pallets, where workers arrange many small packages trimly in eight-by-ten-foot-square loads, at heights to fit either the upper or lower deck of a particular aircraft, and with one top edge rounded slightly to conform to the curve of the plane's sidewall; by the loading of oddly shaped or remarkable objects—a matched set of f[illegible] dark blue Porsche 911s, a prefabricated Calif[illegible] nia ranch-style home; and by the sheer vari[illegible] of goods—bins of chilled horse meat, Pers[illegible] carpets, diplomatic mail bound in sisal tw[illegible] and sealed with red wax, bear testicles, muse[illegible] art exhibitions, cases of explosives.

The impression one gets amid the tiers [illegible] briefly stored cargo and whizzing forklifts is [illegible] mirthless haste. A polite but impatient rectitu[illegible] about the importance of commerce prevails, a[illegible] it forestalls simple questions: Have they run [illegible] of mechanical pencils in Houston? Is the ne[illegible] for eelpout in Osaka now excruciating? A[illegible] there no more shirtmakers in Dakar?

The following day I departed the freezing ra[illegible] and spitting snow of Amsterdam for Cape Tow[illegible] 6,000 miles and an opposing season to the sout[illegible] where one of KLM's smallest facilities operates [illegible] a decidedly different scale. We bring, among ot[illegible] er things, eight white ear-tufted marmosets and tw[illegible] Goeldi's marmosets, both endangered, inbour[illegible] from South America for a local attraction call[illegible] Monkey Den.

When my escort completed our tour—[illegible] semi-enclosed metal shed, no automation—h[illegible] very kindly suggested that we go for a drive. H[illegible] felt harried by shippers' phone calls, cajolin[illegible] for more space than he could provide on th[illegible] outbound flight. I, too, wanted to get awa[illegible] from the clamor.

For the past six days I had been flying [illegible] heavy schedule, mostly in and out of the Fa[illegible] East. I was bewildered by the speed with whic[illegible] everything moved, by how quickly we came an[illegible] went through the countries. In a few hours m[illegible] plane would turn around and fly back to Johan[illegible] nesburg, pick up fresh flowers, hunting trophie[illegible] and raw diamonds, then return to Amsterdam.

We drove west through windblown sand scru[illegible] on the Cape Flats, rather quickly through Cap[illegible] Town itself, and around to Clifton Bay on th[illegible] west side of Table Mountain. The weather ha[illegible] been hot, but it was cooler now, seventy-two[illegible] with a brisk southeast wind, the one they call th[illegible] Doctor.

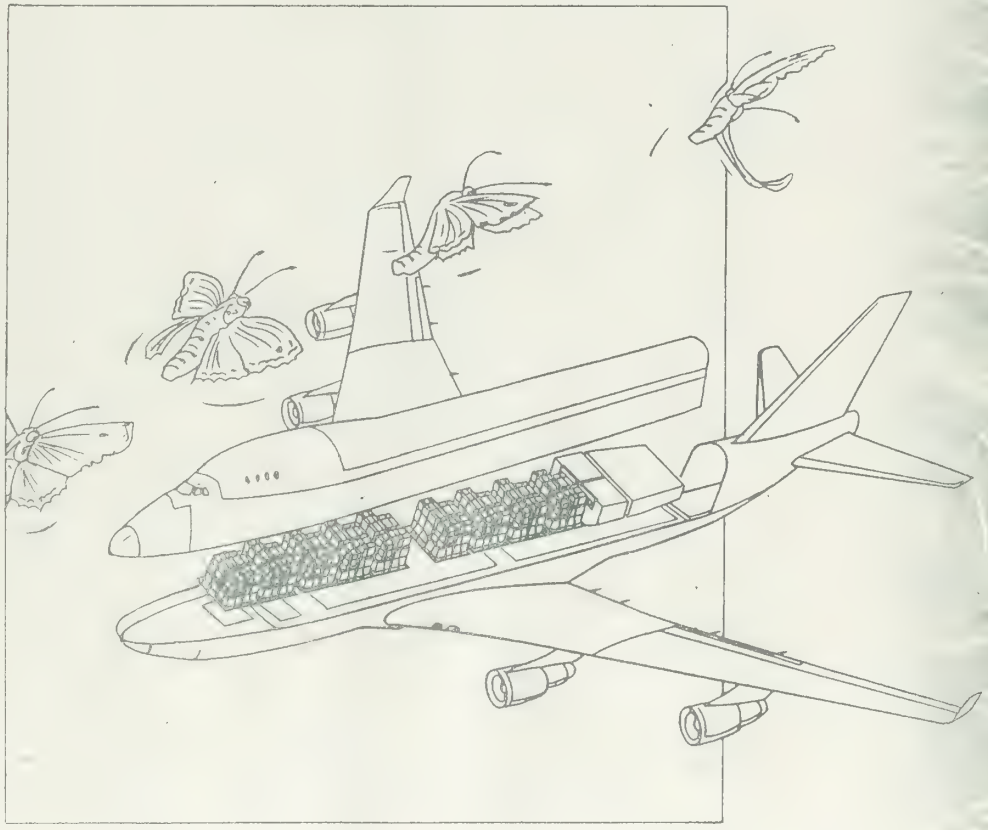
For a long while I stood there on the bluff in[illegible] the summer sunshine, staring into the trans[illegible] parent blue water of the Atlantic. I was acute[illegible] ly aware of history here at Bartolomeu Dias' [illegible] *Cabo Tormentoso* (the Portuguese navigator' [illegible] Cape of Storms, a foreboding appellation hi[illegible] king would later change to *Cabo da Boa Esper*[illegible] *ança,* Cape of Good Hope). Cook and Darwi[illegible] anchored here as did, in 1522, the remnant o[illegible] that part of Magellan's crew under Sebastián [illegible] del Cano. In those days it had taken as many [illegible] months as it now takes hours to come this fa[illegible]

ıth from Europe, and an indifferent sea amped and crushed the Dutch *jachts* and erian caravels like a child's paper sailers. bben Island, where Nelson Mandela spent many years, was just to the north. A few les to the southeast was Skildergat Cave, a ,000-year-old early human site. All of this s once the country of the Khoikhoi people, ng since gone now to Namibia and tswana, where they are called San and ong whom are the much studied !Kung.

My companion was speaking English with a end. When he lapsed into Afrikaans I re- led how, over the past few days, I had been ambling to get even the simplest grasp of alay, Thai, Hindi. I was oving carelessly around e planet. Beneath the fa- liar jet lag I began to nse something else. I oked up past my shoulder the quiet oak and pine ests of Table Mountain, Gama's defining pivot. It d a peculiar time to it, as digenous as its rock. I uld not take that time th me, nor bring my own ne here and drape it pos- ssively over the mountain. that moment I glimpsed e impunity with which I is traveling and the insep- ability of time and space geography. The dispensa- on I enjoyed from the his- rical restraints of immense stance had created an illu- on about time: the earth's aces might vary terrifical- —the moonlight reflect- g last night on Shatt Al- elghir, a saline lake in rren eastern Algeria, was ot the same moonlight ining back from the icy aches of Cook Inlet in Anchorage—but time, ıtil this moment, had seemed a seamless ing, never qualitatively different. Everywhere went, time continued the same, an imperial esent. At most, in these depots and their en- rons, I was resetting my watch.

As I stood there gazing at Table Mountain, ıen back at the transparent Atlantic, I knew ıat the mountain's time was not my time. I was ı this other, no-Sunday, no-night on-time, in- rnational commercial time. I sought out my ıend and asked, "Shouldn't we be getting back?" was beginning to behave as if the present were ıly a preparation for the future. When I phoned my wife to say that I was bewildered, that it was as though all the rests in a symphony had become threats, she said, "It's because you're not going anywhere, you're just going."

Two changes in the late 1980s boosted the growth of international airfreight. Up until then, shipping by air meant being assured that your goods would arrive at such-and-such an airport within forty-eight hours of a promised time. Today, for an average of one to four dollars per pound, a customer expects guaranteed, on-time delivery; and increasingly that service is door-to-door, not airport-to-airport. The largest air-



freight operation in the world (though the bulk of what they haul is small packets) is Federal Express. Next, in descending order of tonnage carried, are Lufthansa, UPS, and Air France, then Korean Air and Northwest. (At present, profitability in the industry remains marginal while airlines continue to maneuver for market share.)

Most air cargo, according to an industry forecaster, now consists of "high-value, time-perishable, consumer items." The business is driven by three things: the growing expectation, worldwide, of having whatever one wants tomorrow, not next week or next month; by frequent changes in fashion and in the design



of basic products; and by a great disparity in labor costs from one country to the next. Much of what one sees aboard a freighter is placeless merchandise; except for the cost of employing a person, it might have been manufactured almost anywhere, including the country of destination. A museum director in Los Angeles found it less expensive, for example, to have the museum's entire red sandstone facade quarried in India, airfreighted to Japan to be dressed, and then flown to Los Angeles than to have it quarried, dressed, and trucked in from Minnesota.

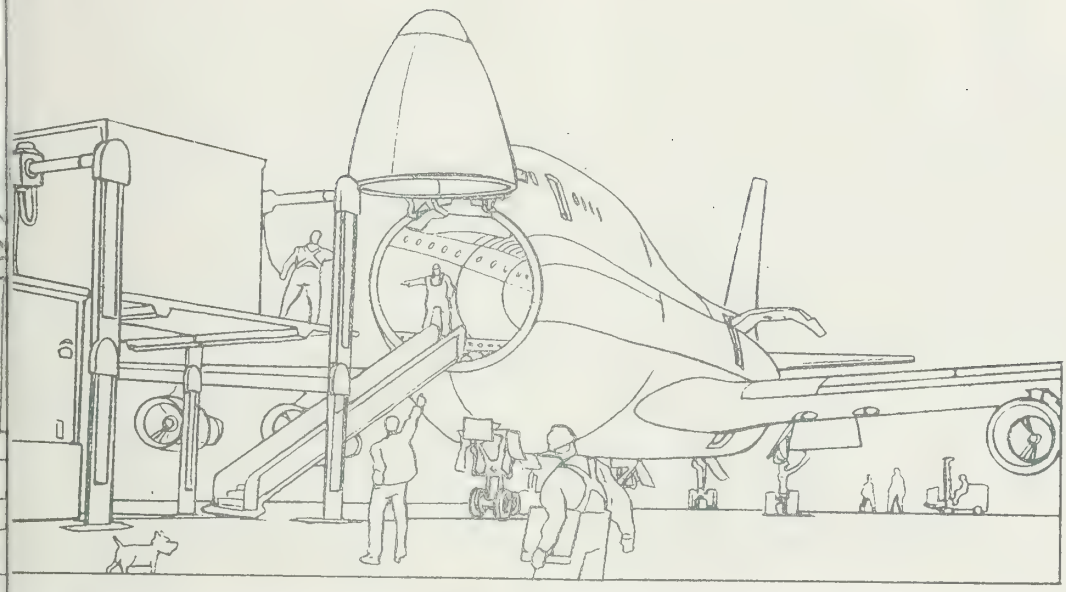
Companies ship phone books from the United States to India to have the names inexpensively keyed in on mailing lists. Automobile insurance claims travel by the boxful from Miami to Manila to be processed by people who are not only cheaper to employ but who make fewer mistakes than the clerks for hire in Miami. And air shippers, exploiting the same small margins that currency traders do, find it less costly to have, say, nine tons of rayon blouses machine cut in Hong Kong and flown to Beijing to be finished by hand than to have all the work done in Hong Kong—before the blouses are flown on to Frankfurt or Chicago.

On long eight- and ten-hour trips on the freighters, I often left the flight deck, though it seemed always to be offering me some spectacular view of the earth—Mt. Pinatubo smoldering in the depopulated Zambales Mountains on Luzon, or L'Anse aux Meadows, a stark site on the northern tip of Newfoundland, where the Norse established a community circa 1000 A.D. Leaving these, I'd climb down the narrow, folding aluminum stairs and stroll the perimeter aisles around the cargo load. Containerized wrapped in plastic, tagged with coded rout labels, the shipments were frequently diffic to identify without the help of manifests or waybills. One night out of Taipei: 17 cartons basketballs for Boston; 5,898 pounds of s glasses headed for Atlanta; 85 cartons of wo en's polyester pajamas for Columbus, Oh cameras, men's ties, battery-operated acti heroes variously directed; and 312 pounds wristwatches for New York. What I saw v often seemed the fulfillment of mail-ord catalogue dreams. The celerity in air freight, fact, and the airplane's ability to gather a distribute goods over huge distances in a mat of hours have made the growth of 800-numb stores like J. Crew, Land's End, and Victori Secret possible. By promoting "just in time" d livery—neither a sweater, a comic book, no jet engine arrives until the moment it's ne ed—airfreight companies have also 1) chang the way businesses define inventory, 2) mad possible for stores to turn storage space in display space, and 3) forced governments to consider the notion of an inventory tax.

What planes carry, generally, is what peo imagine they want. Right now.

Back at D. F. Malan International Airport in C Town, I watched a six-man crew load C wines, salted snook bound for N York, 3,056 pounds of ostrich meat for Brusse and one Wheaton terrier named Diggs for Tor to.

My guide told me that the fellow shipping trich meat, frustrated by a lack of cargo space





Cape Town, had a restaurant in California interested, but without the space he couldn't close the deal. We were looking at the aircraft I had come in on, a 747-400 passenger plane with about 5,900 cubic feet of lower-hold cargo space (passenger baggage might take up only 20 percent of this). Depending on the demand for passenger seating, KLM might occasionally fly a 747-400 Combi into Cape Town, an aircraft in which the aft section of the main deck is given over to seven pallets of freight, while passengers are seated in the forward section—an efficient way for airlines to take advantage of fluctuations in both passenger and freight markets.

Tons of fish, he said, let alone more ostrich meat, could be shipped from Cape Town if only he could guarantee his customers the room. Today he'd be happy to squeeze a surfboard into the bulk-cargo hold, the space farthest aft on the lower deck, a last-on, first-off, loose-loaded compartment, where mail, air waybills, crew baggage, and, today, the Wheaton terrier went.

We continued to exchange stories about peculiar things one sees on board—a yacht headed for an America's Cup race; a tropical-hardwood bowling alley from Bangkok; in San Francisco dough boxed Bing cherries, tied three to a inch and packed neat as flashlight batteries, to fill one 747 freighter after another (27,000 cubic feet). They're not supposed to, but one of the pilots told me he liked to sit in the Ferraris and Lamborghinis he flew. "I've driven them many miles," the pilot said, "and very fast."

Business was good, but strange, I told my guide. Two days ago, on what pilots call the Tashkent Route between Europe and the cities of Karachi, Delhi, Bangkok, Singapore, and Jakarta (via Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia, because the Himalayas are too high and Iranian air space too dangerous), I had seen rocket fire and streams of tracer ammunition in Kabul, Taleban "extremists" and their entrenched opponents. People were being shot dead below, but to the east a full moon was rising rapidly, orange and huge as the sun. It sharply silhouetted the sawtooth peaks of southern ranges in the Hindu Kush. Farther to the southeast, beyond the Khyber Pass and high above the Indus River, a hundred miles of lightning bolts flared and jangled along a storm front. With one glance I took it all in: rockets flaming across the streets below, the silent moon, rain falling in the Indus Valley from a ceiling of cloud, above which the black vault of the sky glittered with stars.

On the Tashkent Route, air-traffic controllers in Dushanbe, Tadzhikistan, pass you on to Lahore, skipping chaotic Kabul altogether. Their voices crackle on the high-frequency radio like explosions of glass, trilling aviation English in the high-pitched intonation of a muezzin. At Lahore, you can see the Pakistani border stretching away south into the Punjab, a beaded snake of security lighting. From here west all the way to Libya (whose air-traffic controllers reprimand you that it is not Libya but "Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Territory"), religious and political tension is pointedly apparent from the sky. Coming up from Dubai, we would swing far out to the west over Saudi Arabia to be wide of Iraq, then dogleg north across Jordan, keeping east of Israel. Leaving Lebanon, we'd enter disputed air space over eastern Cyprus. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot air-

traffic controllers do not play dangerous games with commercial aircraft, but, together with the Syrians, they contest the right among themselves to assign you flight levels and headings. Once across Turkey we'd bear north to stay east of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Every pilot I spoke with had a story of the white-orange flash of lethal fighting seen from above, the named and the unnamed wars of the modern era, fought in Timor, in the Punjab, in what were once called the lawless hinterlands but which are now as accessible as Detroit or Alice Springs.

On the return flight to Johannesburg from Cape Town, I glanced through data comparing this 747-400 with others in KLM's fleet.[3] Each 747, despite being built to the same specifications and being fitted with the same engines, consistently burns slightly more or less fuel, or "performs differently against the book," depending. Northwest Airlines currently flies eight 747-200 freighters into the Far East; I flew on four of them, trying to gain a feeling for their personalities. (With so much history, distance, and weather, I thought—so many accidents, repairs, and strange cargos—there had to be personality.) Once I stayed with a single aircraft from Hong Kong through Taipei to Tokyo, then on to Anchorage, Chicago, and New York before turning back for Seattle—in all, about 12,000 nautical miles in 56 hours. Reading the plane's operating certificates (posted on a lavatory bulkhead in the cockpit) and its logbooks, and after marking all its accessible spaces, what I found was distinctiveness, not personality.

EVERY PILOT HAS A STORY OF THE FLASH OF ROCKET FIRE AS SEEN FROM ABOVE

It was two-thirty in the morning and raining when we landed in Seattle. After the dehydrating hours aloft, mildly hypoxic, my tissues swollen from undissolved nitrogen, I was glad for the wet, oxygen-rich air at sea level. With a security escort shifting from foot to foot at my side, I drew in the night air deep and brushed rain across my face. I'd been with the plane through five crew changes, and an uncomplicated affection had built up for all had done while the crews came and went.

The freighter's belly was glazed with a thin film of oil. In it, and in exhaust grime on the engine's housing, mechanics had fingertraced graffiti. (Inside, on cargo compartment walls, ground crews often scrawl insults, some of a sexual nature, aimed at ground crews in other cities. On inaccessible surfaces within the wings, I was told by riveters at the Boeing plant, some leave declarations of love.)

The fifteen-year-old plane's thin (.06 inches) tempered-aluminum skin was scraped and dented, and it bore a half dozen aluminum patches. (In an effort to keep the plane on schedule, some of these minor tears were first repaired provisionally with "speed tape.") Its windows were micropitted, its 32 ply tires slightly worn, its livery pair chipped. Looking aft from a point near the turn of its flat, streaked belly, I realized for the first time that the plane had the curved flank of a baleen whale, in a scale exact to the extended flukes of its horizontal stabilizer.

I first flew with horses on a Northwest flight out of O'Hare on a bitterly cold February night.[4] Sixteen were headed for lives on Hokkaido ranches among the well-to-do: a Percheron stallion, twelve Appaloosas, and three quarter horses, accompanied by two handlers.

We were delayed getting out. The driver of one of the loaders, a steerable platform used to raise cargo fifteen feet to the rear cargo door, accidentally rammed the plane, punching a hole in a canoe fairing (a cover protecting a jackscrew that extends the plane's flaps and "fairs," or tapers, this protrusion into the wing). We also had to replace an exhaust-gas temperature gauge on the number-three engine, the sort of maintenance that goes on regularly.

The pilot made a shallow climb out of Chicago to lessen the strain on the horses' back legs. He headed out over Wisconsin and Minnesota on a slight zigzag that would take us from one way point to another en route to Anchorage. Planes rarely fly a direct route be-

[3] *KLM has five 747-400 passenger planes and eleven 747-400 Combis but no dedicated freighters. Virtually all wide-body passenger aircraft, however, carry, in addition, a diverse and often substantial belly cargo, not only of manufactured goods, flowers, fresh food, and live animals but, more and more, containers of personal effects and the coffins of returning nationals. At the end of 1994, about 1,000 freighters were flying. By 2014, the industry predicts, 2,080 freighters will be in operation, 38 percent of them aircraft the size of 747s, capable of carrying 120 to 150 tons. Smaller loads of similar goods will continue to fly aboard thousands of "passenger" aircraft.*

[4] *Thoroughbred horses fly back and forth between the continents constantly during the respective national racing seasons. Slaughter horses, mostly young draft horses, are carried to the Far East from the United States and Canada with some regularity, 114 at a time. With a reduction in import duties on fresh meat in the Far East, slaughter cattle like those killed in the Anchorage crash have become less economical to fly live.*

:en airports unless the skies are relatively pty, usually late at night, the time when st freight moves. Freighter pilots, some of om wear bat wings instead of eagle wings l refer to themselves as "freight dogs," call it ing the backside of the clock."

Soon after we're airborne I go down to look the horses. The animals are lined up in six lls on the right side of the aircraft, the 00-pound black Percheron in the first stall h a bred quarter horse; behind them a leop- Appaloosa stallion with a bred Appaloosa; l behind them, downwind in the flow of air, r stalls of bred and "open" mares, with four es and colts. They aren't sedated, most are ing. They've been left unshod to give them etter hold on the stall floor, and won't be tered or fed for twenty-four hours in transit. mmed in by the usual farrago—aortic ves, poultry-processing equipment, mainne computers, golf clubs, men's knit underar—the horses are strangely peaceful. I can't ar their breathing or stomach noises over the nd of the engines. I turn the lights out and ve them be.

On the flight deck, a narrow space like a lcar living room, the handlers are slumped h novels in a single row of tourist-class seats ward the rear, the only passenger seats avail- e besides the jump seat. The flight engineer s just brewed a fresh pot of coffee. I settle in nind the captain to peruse the freight manits. I gaze out the window. Every few minutes ook at the instrument panel in front of the ilot and at the hydraulic, fuel, and electrical els in front of the flight engineer sitting a inches to my right.

The 747 is not the biggest freighter in the , but in every other way—making long ils economically on a scheduled basis—it is rivaled. The biggest plane in regular service the Russian Antonov 124, a fuel-guzzling, lking beast of an aircraft that works at the ges of the world of airfreight, hauling unal loads on a charter basis. The only way to ve emergency equipment (oil-skimming ats, fire-fighting trucks) or large quantities of ergency supplies (medicine, food, gas masks, ts) quickly around the world is on airighters, and the Antonov 124 ferries such terial routinely and many more unusual ngs: French fighter planes to Venezuela; 132 s of stage equipment for a Michael Jackson ncert in Bucharest; a Pepsi-Cola bottling nt, complete, to Buenos Aires; a 38-ton bull r to repair an oil tanker stranded in the Per- n Gulf; 36,000 cubic feet of cigarettes per ght on repeated trips between Amsterdam d Moscow in December 1992.

Once we gain 18,000 feet, the flight engineer sets our altimeters to read against an atmospheric pressure of 29.92 inches of mercury. We will measure altitude against this pressure until we descend on approach into Anchorage, a standardization that ensures that planes all over the world will figure their altitudes on the same basis once they leave the air space around an airport. We've also left local time behind. Now all our communications are based on Coordinated Universal Time (UTC, formerly Greenwich Mean Time or Zulu time, as it is still sometimes called, the earth's time zones having once been divided among the letters of the alphabet). Another universal grid we are fixed in is that of degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude. And altitude, of course. (The altimeter shows altitude above mean sea level; if the altimeter reads 7,500 feet over Mexico City, you are 100 feet off the ground.)

These grids provide a common reference, and their uniformity makes flying safer, but there are dissenters around the globe, especially where time zones are concerned. Tonga, along with Russia's Chukotski Peninsula, insists on occupying a twenty-fifth time zone. When it's 12:15 on Sunday morning in Tonga, it's 11:15 on Friday night in Western Samoa, a few hundred miles to the northeast. And against UTC whole hours, central Australia stays on the half hour, Nepal keeps to a three-quarter hour, and Suriname adheres to ten minutes before the hour.[5]

SOME PILOTS WEAR BAT WINGS AND REFER TO THEMSELVES AS "FREIGHT DOGS"

Virtually everyone communicates over the radio in English, but it is often heavily accented English, and outside customary requests and responses, English is of limited use in areas like China or in what pilots call Sea Asia. Russian pilots, for their part, are unique in insisting on the use of meters per second instead of knots for air speed, and on meters instead of feet for altitude. In addition, Russian commercial planes don't use the Traffic Collision Avoidance System, which

[5] *It is largely forgotten today that the notion of "standard time" in the United States, as opposed to local time, was promulgated by railroad commissions to coordinate the needs of railroads and other businesses engaged in long-distance commerce. A nationwide system, enforced by railroads and then by factories, was entrenched by 1883. Congress eventually gave its official approval, although several states—Utah, Minnesota, California—fought the inconvenience until 1917. The principal objection was that standard time distorted the natural rhythms of human life for the sake of greater efficiency in business and commerce. Today Cincinnati lives, more or less complacently, by Boston's sunrise.*

warns of approaching aircraft, nor do they send out a signal so that planes with the system know they're there. Pilots learn of the presence of Russian aircraft only through air-traffic controllers. To politely register their disapproval of these tenuous arrangements, European pilots flash their landing lights at approaching Russian planes and wait for a response.

The wide acceptance of such standardized measurements and procedures can lead to the impression that a generally convivial agreement obtains throughout the world. And when, in one week, you transport the same sorts of freight to Cairo, Melbourne, and Rio de Janeiro, it is also easy to draw the conclusion that people everywhere want more or less the same things. However pervasive, the view is illusory. The airplane's speed and geographic reach benefit the spread of a European and North American consumer ethic, but not all of the world's cultures can be folded into this shape. One need only leave the airport in Lima or Calcutta or Harare to see how true this is. It is not merely poverty and starvation you see, the ring of another music you hear, or inversions of Western intuition you observe. It is starkly different renderings of the valuable.

Again and again, stalled in boulevard traffic in hot, choking air, feeling the taxi bumped by a languid crosscurrent of beggars, I thought of the speed of the plane, of how much it could leave behind. If we fled quickly enough, I thought, nothing could catch up.

One morning at KLM's corporate headquarters near Amsterdam, I spoke with a vice president in his corner office. Beyond us, planes were taking off every couple of minutes like salvos. "When I was a boy," he said, "I was given my father's watch. I thought that would be my watch for the rest of my life. But I have five watches now. I choose one in the morning to match my suit, my tie. You just buy them." He spread his hands, a gesture of lament and consternation. In an adjacent office, another vice president told me, "Speed is the word. Air cargo is the answer to speed, it makes speed happen." I could not tell from his piercing look whether he meant it as a summary or an indictment.

An oceanic expanse of gray-white below obscures a four-square grid of Saskatchewan grain fields, a snow plain nicked by the dark, unruly lines of woody swales. One might imagine that little is to be seen from a plane at night, but above the clouds the Milky Way is a dense, blazing arch. A full moon often lights the planet freshly, and patterns of human culture, artifically lit, are striking in ways not visible in daylight. One evening I saw the distinctive glows of Bhiwani, Rohtak, Ghaziabad, a
a dozen other cities around Delhi, diffused l
spiral galaxies in a continuous deck of stra
clouds far below us. In Algeria and on t
Asian steppes, wind-whipped pennants of
flared. The jungle burned in incandescent sp
on peninsular Malaysia and in southern Bra
One clear evening, at 20,000 feet over M
hattan, I could see, it seemed, every streetli
halfway to the end of Long Island. A sumr
lightning bolt once unexpectedly revea
thousands of bright dots on the ink-black v
of the northern Transvaal: sheep. Anot
night, off the eastern coast of Korea, I ar
from a nap to see a tight throw of the bright
light I'd ever observed. I thought we were
over a city until I glanced at the horizon
saw the pallid glow of coastal towns betw
Yŏngdŏk and Samch'ŏk. The lights directly
low, brilliant as magnesium flares, were th
of a South Korean fishing fleet.

Over Anchorage we slam into severe tur
lence at 34,000 feet. The plane seems sudde
to shrink, and we are pitched through the
like a wood chip for ten minutes before we
clear of it and divert to Fairbanks. When I
below with a handler, the horses appear
have come through the violence unfazed.
handler knows and speaks soothingly to e
animal. As we go down the line he recalls t
breeding histories. Draft horses like
Percheron, he says, are the calmest breed,
working quarter horses are bred for calmn
He isn't surprised that they are all right
that they settle down quickly.

If you ask pilots which loads they most
member, they mention either costly objects
$319,000 Bentley, flying 70,000 pounds of g
into Riyadh—or animals. Most say that V
namese potbelly pigs are the worst creature
haul, their stench so permeating that pi
have to strip off their uniforms, seal them
plastic bags, and fly in clothes that they l
throw away. (As bad, they say, is a planeloa
durians—pulpy, melon-sized fruit whose s
reminds most Westerners of vomit.)

When large animals—draft horses
bulls—kick their stalls in mid-flight, you
feel the plane shudder. Goats and ostric
chew at whatever cargo they can reach.
pilot told me that he went down one nigh
look at a white tiger. Believing she'd beer
dated, he drew close to the bars to peer in.
charged as ferociously as the cage permit
sending the pilot reeling onto his back.
animal's roar, he said, drowned out the s
of the engines and nearly stopped his heart.

Pilots remember animals in some detail—
puppies turned loose in the cockpit, a killer w
in a tank—because they are alive and ma

ese formidable journeys. Like the pilots.

We wait in Fairbanks until the Anchorage ather quiets, then fly back, landing in light bulence. A 747 freighter taking off just after land hits a wind shear, and in less than two conds accelerates from 210 to 260 knots. An ur later, on takeoff, we abruptly lose 20 ots of airspeed when a headwind collapses. e're barely airborne when the departure reshold on the runway passes under our eels. Two hours later our automatic pilot lfunctions. The nose plunges violently and are in a rapid descent. In one of the swiftest d most assured moves I've ever seen a person ke, the pilot recovers the plane and brings back level before we fall 500 feet.

When I again accompany the handlers be-w, we find the horses awakened by the fall d spooked by our soundless approach. They re awhile, then doze off.

In these same minutes the sun has just risen (at ,000 feet it clears the horizon about twenty-two nutes earlier than it does when seen from a ot on the earth directly below), but the moon s not yet set, and for a while I hold both in the ne gaze, in a sky that goes from azure to milk-ie between horizons. We are pushing against a 0-knot headwind, common this time of year er the North Pacific. When I ask whether the ots have names for these winds aloft around the rld, the captain says, "No, we haven't been ing long enough."

Far beneath us the winds are calmer. The rnished ocean surface seven miles below ap-ars as still as a slab of stone, crinkled like an phant's skin. I see one ship headed south-st against the Okhotsk Current, far off the ast of Kamchatka, its wake flared at the char-teristic thirty-nine-degree angle.

When Japan looms I feel suddenly very tired. haven't slept for thirty hours—traveling to icago, then caught up in events surrounding e horses, anticipating the appearance of the rora borealis en route to Anchorage, listen-g to the pilots tell stories, looking out the ndow at the remoteness of Alaska, at the ectacle of clouds. Beneath us, every day, I'd en buttermilk, mare's tail, and mackerel ies, then looked in vain through phrase oks and small dictionaries for what they are lled in Korean, Spanish, Dutch.

We touch down at Narita International Air-rt at 12:42 P.M. local standard time. At 12:45 set the plane's parking brake at Gate 211.[6]

ilots use different methods to compute their actual (as tinct from scheduled) flying time. One is "block to ck," or from the pulling of the nosewheel chocks at end to the setting of them at the other end. North-st pilots are limited to 82.5 hours of flying per month l to no more than 30 hours in any seven-day period.

At 12:54 Japanese officials open the door and a quarantine officer boards to inspect the horses. Once he is assured of their good health, he leads us down the air stairs where, one by one, we step gingerly through a plastic basin of disinfectant. The horse handlers, wearing fine-looking western boots, hesitate a moment.

The wood stalls are to be burned. The horses will be in quarantine here for three weeks before being flown to Hokkaido. I remember the snorts of steam and billowing breath on the ramp at O'Hare and wish I could see them now, standing, like us, in the sunshine and balmy breezes outside the plane.

From my accustomed seat, just behind and slightly to the left of the pilot, I have a clear view to the southeast over the South China Sea. Though it is slightly awkward to manage, I often lean into this window; just those few inches closer and my view widens appreciably. I look back at the port wing, the sleek gape of the engines, at a pinpoint of nuclear light opening and closing on a windshield ten miles away. At night, if I rotate my gaze 180 degrees, holding the upper edge of the slanted window against the stars, the world and the plane itself seem utterly still, immobile.

WHEN DRAFT HORSES OR BULLS KICK THEIR STALLS IN MID-FLIGHT, YOU CAN FEEL THE PLANE SHUDDER

Now far to the south a ribbon of sunlit cumulus towers, fumaroles and haystacks, great pompadour waves of clouds. I never tire of seeing them, the most dominating evanescent form on the planet. We have seen a great range of them since leaving Tokyo. East of Honshu, over the Pacific, the ocean was occluded by a vast sheet of wool-nap cumulus. When that flat plain opened hundreds of miles later into a lattice, the formation appeared serried in three dimensions. These puffs eventually thinned, and I thought the sky cloudless until I looked up to see a rice-paper layer of cirrostratus. Then it, too, thinned to blue space, and for a while there was nothing but an occasional fair-weather cumulus, built up over a distant Pacific atoll, until we came to this rampart of heaped clouds: *cumulus congestus*. For all their beauty, the impossibly slow tai chi of their movement, clouds are of almost no help, claim the pilots, in anchoring a sense of depth or distance in the troposphere. They accentuate, however, the peculiar and insistent, ethereal nature of the sky.

I need to stretch. None of the three pilots

wants anything from the galley,[7] so I raise the smoke door (which would give us some protection in the event of a main-deck fire) and descend the stairs to take a turn around the cargo. Unlike the pilots, I cannot resist a look each time the plane's contents change. I am drawn by the promise of revelation in the main hold. "Used clothing" might refer to a boutique-bound consignment of East German military uniforms. A fabled rumor of cargo might be confirmed. But the pilots, who speak animatedly about circus tigers, Lamborghini Diablos, and small wooden pallets of gold bars, each in its own burlap bag, seem uninterested or vaguely embarrassed by the bulk of what fills the space behind their heads.[8]

The specter of a fire down here is, of course, terrifying, as is the thought of a printing press or a stack of steel pipe breaking loose in turbulence. For this reason the contents of air shipments are carefully reviewed and documented; pilots receive written notification of even the smallest quantities of corrosives, explosives, and radioactive materials on board—anything that could start a fire. Cargo loads are tightly secured and neatly arranged so as to be accessible in flight. The flight engineer's last responsibility on his walkaround before departure is to check each piece of fire-fighting equipment and make sure that each pallet and container is secure; the ones I watched were thorough about it.

On flights to North America from the Far East's "new tigers"—Jakarta, Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Taipei—the planes ferry (in descending order, by weight) personal computers, sound-recording equipment, athletic shoes, photocopying equipment, and clothes. Traveling from North America to the Far East are comparable loads of motors and engines, personal computer telecommunications equipment, and tractor par Such commodities formed the bulk of most sh ments I accompanied, but it was the condimen so to speak, that made a load memorable: tw hundred styrofoam cases of live tropical fish fr Manila (labeled LTF) swimming in bags of ox genated water, bound for Los Angeles; two Cad lac Eldorados for Osaka; canvas bags of hom bound paper bills (the accumulation of curren exchanges); munitions of war (MUW) for Kh toum; bundles of mesquite wood, for cooking, of Houston; and noisome industrial chemic (OBX).

In a fully loaded 747-200, cargo is palletiz on thin aluminum "cookie sheets," wrapp tightly in clear plastic weatherproofing opaque plastic, to discourage thieves), and cured against shifting by webs or rope ne Twenty-two rectangular sealed containers a pallets, dogged to a floor of steel casters a roller track with red latches, stand in pa down the middle of the airplane, leaving n row outboard aisles. Two additional uni canted to the taper of the plane, extend al the starboard wall into the nose. In the tail, of a ten-foot-wide cross aisle directly opposit cargo door, stand another four units. A twen ninth unit stands behind them, near the op wall rack that holds the plane's Flight D Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder.

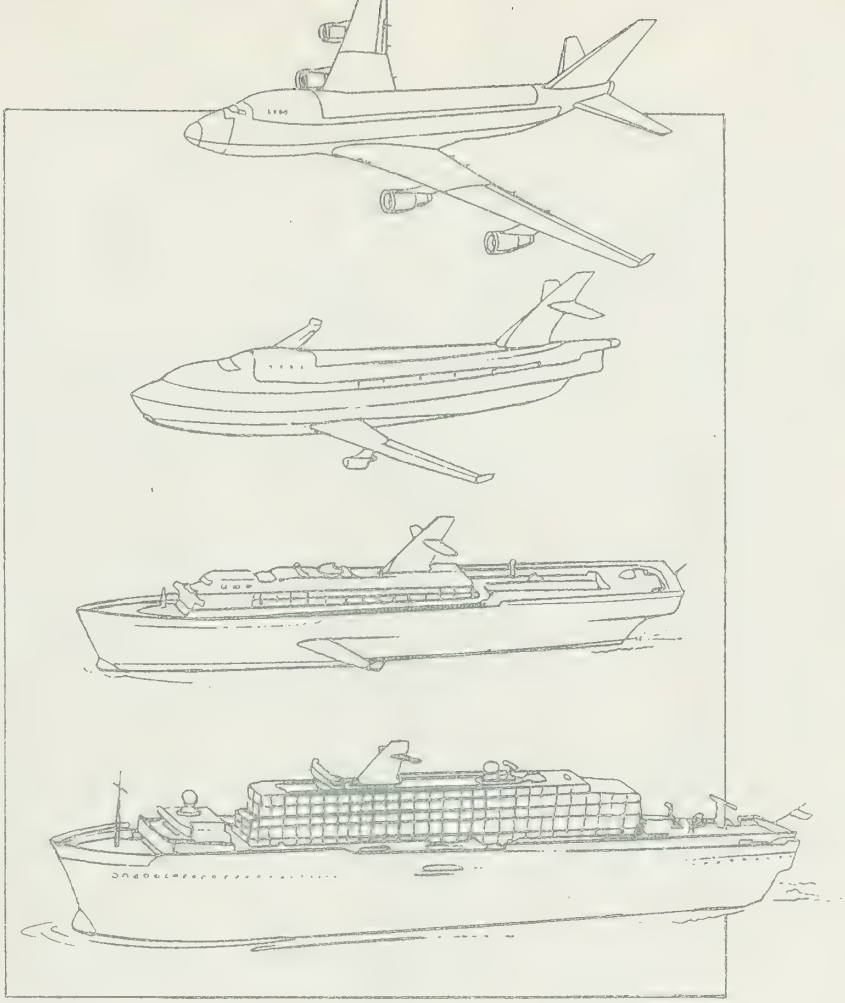
I sideslip by containers and pallets on port side and look back from the cross aisle our freight for Singapore and Bangkok. It sh mies in the cobblestone turbulence of w Wilbur Wright called "the infinite highwa the air," a rickety but firm, continuous vib tion. From a viewport on the flight deck, w this area lit dimly by only a few safety lig the plastic-wrapped cargo looks like a dou row of huge jellyfish strung up in a freezer.

Moving forward up the starboard aisle, nally stand in an eerie place at the forward e of the main deck, looking at the back side of fiberglass radar dome that fills the plane's n I look down into an open bay framed on eit side by large jackscrews that push the nose out up for loading through the front. The lip of precipice, which I grip with my toes, is as clo one can get to standing on the bow of a sh spread my arms wide for balance, shut my e and lean into the velocity of the plane. The so of the engines is behind me, inaudible over scream of air.

Chief pilots, or captains, men in their e fifties, "in the left-hand seat," tend to ga some purpose out the windows, while copilot first officers, men (and, rarely, women) in t

7 The heritage of oceangoing vessels is preserved in the language and some of the design of modern airplanes. Pilots frequently call the plane a ship; its fuselage, a hull. Its interior space is divided into decks that extend fore and aft. The captain might refer to starting an engine as turning a wheel. He steers the plane on the ground with a tiller and speaks of docking the ship, after which, on a freighter, cargo is always taken off the main deck on the port side (originally, the side of a ship designed for use in port). A rudder in the plane's vertical stabilizer changes its course. Waterline numbers stenciled on the interior of the hull indicate height above the ground. Sailboat fairings taper engine mounts into wings that bear green running lights to starboard, red lights to port.

8 About 4:00 A.M. one December night in Hong Kong, I stood at the top of our air stairs with my binoculars, scanning nearby office buildings. Christmas trees twinkled on a dozen floors. I had seen Christmas trees banked with brightly wrapped gift boxes in Muslim Dubai and in the Buddhist city of Bangkok, as well as in Amsterdam and Houston. The displays, of course, had nothing to do with the Christianity of, say, Joseph of Arimathea. "This time of year," one pilot told me while we waited in Hong Kong, "we're flying freighters out of here wingtip to wingtip."



-thirties, remain focused
ıin the plane.
n the evolution of mod-
jet flight, there has been
ramatic shift away from
use of navigational refer-
es outside the plane, such
vers, to using electronically
›layed information with-
he plane. Some of the co-
›ts I spoke with, in fact,
only hazy notions of the
graphy they flew over.
ey were inclined to fly
ads down," studying the
e map, reviewing the flight
ı (a sequence of way points,
expected fuel burn, the
ed and direction of winds
t), and watching their in-
ıments and screens. On
most advanced commer-
aircraft, it is the copilots
› are frequently caught up
he protracted task of pro-
ımming the plane's com-
ers. ("I don't fly anymore,"
y joke, "but I can type six-
ords a minute.") [9]

The chief pilots, many of
m, possess a notable,
que knowledge of how
earth has changed over the past thirty
rs: how far south, for example, the Sahara
ert has extended, how much the Aral Sea
shrunk, how far center-pivot irrigation has
ad in Saudi Arabia. It's a knowledge that
lates satellite imagery and often is more his-
ically integrated. Many of these pilots
ned the earth's surfaces when older planes
d them to lower altitudes, when ground
ks like pipelines and lakes were more im-
ant to navigation. Today, in advanced air-
t, they routinely fly high above the weather
utomatic pilot and seldom descend for fuel.
lispatcher in a windowless international of-
half a world away will organize a sense of
graphy for them and radio in or even tele-
ne with any changes due, say, to increased
m activity. There's little need to watch the
ther, or anything else.

ilots say they "fly by wire" now, no longer
sing the plane's response in their hands and
. They refer to "cockpit management skills"
more often than to their "stick and rudder" ability. In the 747-400, they monitor six separate cathode-ray screens, mesmerizing as small televisions. In this kind of self-absorbed travel, built on a dashboard knowledge of one's surroundings, a sense of both geographic scale and particularity is ruptured. Flights cover huge distances in a few hours; matriculation at a hotel, often reached on a crew bus driven down an advertising corridor similar to the airport's passenger corridors, is brief. English is spoken everywhere. Seven-Up, Anacin, *Rambo*, CNN, Ray-Ban, and *Time* are omnipresent. Reality outside the plane slowly merges with the comforting, authoritative, and self-referential world within it.

Jet lag is popularly construed as an affliction of the unseasoned traveler, a preventable distraction. No pilot I talked to regarded it as such but rather as a sort of temporal and spatial abuse that, by the time you reached your fifties, could overwhelm you on a single trip.

Over many days of flight, I fought my own idiosyncratic battle with jet lag, following the common advice of pilots to sleep when you're tired and eat when you're hungry. When I got home, after traveling 30,000 or 40,000 miles in

*›ts refer to newer planes like the Boeing 777 and the
as 320 synecdochically as "glass cockpits," planes in
h the information most frequently reviewed is dis-
d in color overlays on video-like screens. The in-
ıent cluster in older jet aircraft is referred to collec-
as "steam gauges."*

ten days, I would fall into bed like an iron ingot dropped in the dust. On the road, like the pilots, I endured the symptoms of a jagged, asynchronous life. No matter how exhilarating a trip might have been, I sensed upon leaving the plane that a thrashing like the agitation of a washing machine had ended and that, slightly dazed, I was now drifting off my path, a yawing ship. My tissues felt leaden. Memory seemed a pea suspended in the empty hull of my body. I had the impression that my mind was searching for the matching ends of myriad broken connections and that it was vaguely panicked by the effort. The fabric of awareness felt discontinuous. Time shoaled, losing its familiar depth and resonance. I craved darkness and stillness. I believed that without stillness no dreams would come and that without dreams there would be no recovery. Once, in a hotel, I slept on solely to dream.

LEAVING THE PLANE, I FELT SLIGHTLY DAZED, AS IF DRIFTING OFF MY PATH, A YAWING SHIP

The physical hazards of long-term flying are relatively minor—an increased incidence of cataracts, high-frequency hearing loss—or unknown—the effect, for example, of regular exposure to high doses of cosmic radiation. Pilots more than copilots will tell you that whatever health hazards they may face, they love flying too much to give it up. Many think that jet lag is the principal cause of chronic moodiness, a prime source of tension in their domestic relationships. But they view separation and divorce as grim contemporary realities, and say resignedly that they are very well paid for what they do.

I liked the pilots I flew with. They had a remarkable ability to relax for hours in a state of alertness (pilots describe the job as "hours of boredom punctuated by minutes of terror"). They seemed able to monitor an instrument's unwavering reading and run technical checklists repeatedly without mentally wandering from or re-imagining the information. Their hand movements were smooth, slow, direct; they concentrated on precision and routine, on thoroughness. The virtues they admired—dedication to one's job, loyalty, allegiance to a code—were more military than corporate. Some, like generals, carried with them a peculiar, haggard isolation.

Standing between the pilots on the Singapore flight, my neck bowed beneath the overhead instrument panel, I could take the most commanding view possible of space outside the plane. Over the South China Sea, I could see outlying islands in the Spratly Archipelago to the south-east. To the northwest were the distant Mouths of the Mekong: Cua Tranh De, Cua Dinh A Cua Ham Luong. A while later, Indonesia's Bu guran Selatan Archipelago loomed off the po side, the translucent sea turquoise over its ree Afternoon light from the bare orb of the su filled the clear air at 37,000 feet with a tangib effulgence that made the island of Subi and th water seem closer. We looked down from th keep of our own wind, through layers of wind, t wind on the water; below that the surface curre ran counter to currents deeper still. Toward Kar mata Strait, between Borneo and Belitung Islan to the south, a single layer of thin stratus cast i shadow over a hundred square miles of wate Beyond it the sea was brilliant. The effect was if I were looking from today across the night an into tomorrow.

Ending a long silence in the cockpit, th captain said, "The earth is beautiful."

On our approach to Singapore, smoke bega pouring out of the window vents—warm h mid air from outside condensing in our dry i terior. The pilots enjoyed my alarm.

On the ground, while the plane was u loaded, and then reloaded for Bangkok an Tokyo, I strolled through mown grass in an a jacent field. Two common mynah birds lande on the port wing.

The hotel in Seoul was just west of Mt. Namsa Park in Yongsan-Ku, in the city's southwe quarter. The crew bus would not leave for th airport for four hours, and I had risen before sun rise to take a long walk. I wanted to see things th couldn't be purchased.

I walked north through a cramped residenti district. Seoul is a city of granite hills, of cra and pinnacles. On this winter morning it fille gradually with a diffuse gray light under heav overcast skies. As I wandered the narro streets, I endeavored not to seem too curio about what was displayed on the shelves small stores attached to small two-story house Instead I observed what sort of bicycles peop rode, what kind of clothing they wore again the cold—indigenous solutions to commo problems. I studied the spines of books di played in a window, the Chinese, Japanese, an Korean titles mixed. I could not see past a stre reflection in the window glass whether a com panion volume was in Arabic.

Some Westerners traveling today in th Middle East may experience what they take f irritation over religious differences; in Seoul- or Bangkok or Wuhan—the look a Western may get while walking through residenti streets seems more often one of resentment

vilderment at the imposition of economic
nge. You are the one responsible, the looks
ly, for swift, large-scale, painful alterations
my culture; you see them as improvements,
they are designed only to make business—
r sort of business—flow more smoothly. It is
, they seem to say, who define, often and ti-
ically, what is of value.

What I felt—the discomforting gospel of a
ld-encircling consumerism of which I was
inadvertent symbol—I could have felt as an
ictment in any of a dozen other cities.
at I had hoped for here was relief from the
act of culture I felt every time the plane
ded.

Some in the West see in such rearrange-
nts net gains; others, net losses. I do not
strongly either way, though I'm saddened,
a traveler, by the erosion of languages, the
inishment of other systems of aesthetics,
the loss of what might be called a philoso-
of hand tools. It is easy to rue the lack of
raint in promoting consumption as a way of
, but we daily accept myriad commercial so-
ons to our own discontent—the assuage-
nt of new clothing, new investments, new
rapies to ease our disaffection. Some who
lure such accelerated living (our advertising
sumes) find it a relief periodically to sweep
rything into the past, making room for less
igating, more promising products or situa-
ns. But it is a rare consumer who has any
se of what such inclinations require of the
ld around him.

t is not difficult to disparage the capitula-
n in such manic living; what is hard to avoid
he impulse to blame or the instinct to ex-
pt oneself. Getting dressed at the hotel, I
l to smile at the labels in my clothing:
Crew, GAP, The Territory Ahead, Patago-
. My shoes, dark brown suede wing tips, had
n made in Korea.

Once, suspended over the North Pacific, I
d the image of a loom in my mind. If these
hts back and forth across the Pacific are the
t, I wondered, what is the warp, the world
ady strung, through which my shuttle cuts
k and forth? And what pattern is the weave
ducing?

ne plane I boarded out of Seoul was a passen-
er flight with a lower hold full of cargo for
ita. There I boarded a freighter bound for
w York via Anchorage. In the Jeppesen
nual that most United States pilots carry—a
-inch-thick ring binder of tissue-thin pages
taining detailed information about air-
ts—Anchorage is described as a consistently
gerous place to get in and out of. The near-
by area experiences a lot of wind shear and turbulence; icing is common in winter.[10]

Pilots recall with little prompting the details of commercial airplane crashes going back many years. Each one is a warning. Their interest is almost entirely technical and legal, not macabre. While I was flying in the Middle East, a freighter crashed in Kansas City, killing the three pilots aboard. Although the crew I was with read the story in the *International Herald Tribune*, no one commented. The pilots presume such reports are always confused and therefore misleading. They wait instead for the National Transportation Safety Board findings to appear in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*.

PILOTS DESCRIBE THE JOB AS "HOURS OF BOREDOM PUNCTUATED BY MINUTES OF TERROR"

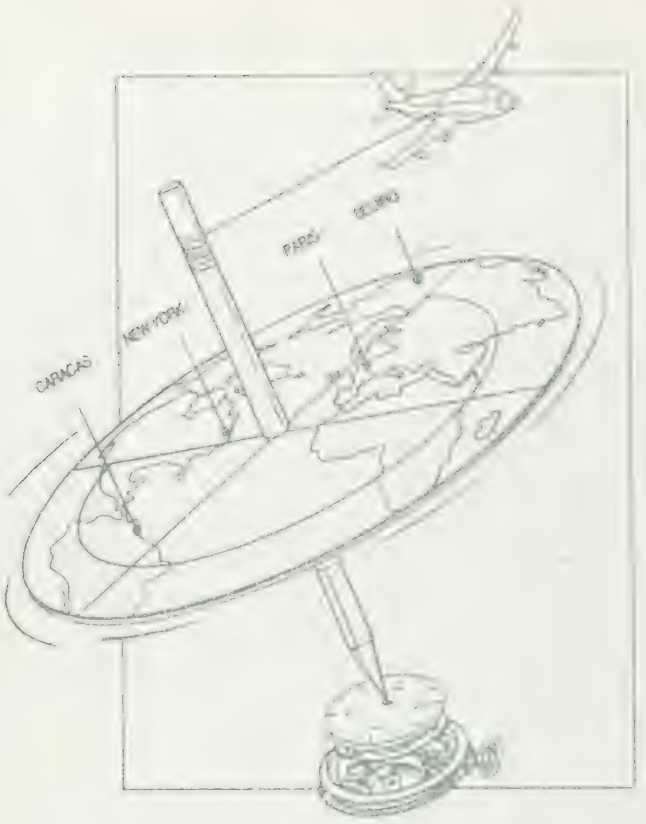
We had no trouble getting into or out of Anchorage, and we enjoyed an undisturbed flight to New York, with spectacular views of the Canadian Rockies. On the next leg, from JFK to San Francisco, I fell into conversation with the pilot about the history of aerodynamic design that produced the 747. Like many pilots, he had an intuitive sense of the volume of abstract space and was a gazer-out-of-windows. It was about one in the morning. Air-traffic control in New York had given us a direct path to San Francisco. Our flight plan showed no areas of turbulence ahead, and no one in front of us was reporting any. The moonless sky was glimmering, deep. I asked the pilot if he had ever heard of James Turrell. He hadn't.

I'd hoped for weeks to speak with someone who had. Turrell is best known for an enormous project called Roden Crater near Flagstaff in northern Arizona. He reconformed the crater with bulldozers and road graders, believing celestial space actually had shape, that one could perceive the "celestial vault" above the earth, and that a view from within the crater would reveal that architecture by so disposing the viewer. Turrell, a pilot, once said, "For me, flying really dealt with these spaces delineated by air conditions, by visual penetration, by sky conditions; some were visual, some were only felt. These are the kinds of space I wanted to work with."

People who have come to Roden Crater—heavy-equipment operators as well as museum curators—say, yes, you do see that the sky has shape from the crater. I told the pilot I'd like to go.

After a while the pilot turned around in his seat and said, "He's right. I know what he's

[10] *The turbulence over Anchorage that we encountered on the flight with the horses was the worst that one of the pilots had ever experienced. On another flight out of Anchorage, the freighter built up the heaviest loads of ice the chief pilot had ever had to contend with.*



talking about. The space you fly the plane through has shape." I asked if he thought that time had boundary or dimension, and told him what I had felt at Cape Town, that time pooled in every part of the world as if in a basin. The dimension, the transparency, and the agitation were everywhere different. He nodded, as if together we were working out an equation.

A while later he said, "Being 'on time' is like being on fire."

One of my last flights takes me to Buenos Aires, seat of the old viceroyalty on the Río de la Plata, the river of silver. Here, as in other places I visited, the people in the freight depot are friendly and open, and sometimes quite sophisticated about ironies in the airfreight business. I go to lunch with four men who treat me to a meal of Argentine beef and a good Argentine red wine. Affecting philosophical detachment, they explain the non-European way to conduct business in Buenos Aires, the paths money might take here. We laugh. Then three of us go to a strong room to inspect a shipment of gold bullion.

Afterward, I walk out onto the tarmac with the KLM freight manager, who is directing the loading of flight 798 from Buenos Aires to Amsterdam, a thirteen-hour run. In the crackle blast of combusting kerosene, swept by hot winds, I watch the pallets go aboard. These, I have come to understand, are the goods. This lovely, shrieking behemoth, the apotheosis of modern imagination and invention, is being filled yet ag with what we believe in. I watch, as agnost must once have watched at Chartres, for a si a confirmation of faith. I see frozen trout; fr strawberries; eighty cases of live worms; seven three pounds of gold for Geneva packed in li green metal boxes sealed with embossed a minum bands, wrapped in clear plastic, ban again with steel strapping. An armed security ficer stands by until the bulk-cargo door is clos then stands at a distance, watching.

The last load in the aft compartment is f tons of horse meat. The temperature is set fifty-three degrees, and the door is closed. T last load in the forward compartment will 175 penguins. They have come in on the pla from Santiago and are headed for Tok They've been waiting in the noise and h around the airplane for freight in the forw compartment to be rearranged, the weig more evenly distributed.

The penguins stand in separate cells, packed f to a wooden crate. A wire-mesh panel on t front of each box, beginning at chest level, sla up and back, reaching the top of the box j above head height. So constructed, air can c culate to those on the inside of the load when the crates are stacked in tiers on a single pall The gangs of five face in four directions; so see us, some see one another, some the back of other box. I recognize magellanic and rockhop penguins. If they are making any noise I ca hear it over the jet engines. A few strike at the w mesh with their bills. Some of the rockhoppers r on their feet, cramping their heads, and flap th flippers repeatedly against the dividers.

After they are loaded, the temperature their compartment is set at forty-three degr and the door is closed.

KL 798, a passenger flight, takes us up t south coast of Brazil, above the Serra do M and Serra do Espinhaço and out over the A lantic near Natal. There is a lightning sto near Recife, on the coast. I send my worn let of introduction up to the cockpit to see if would be possible to watch and talk for a wh The purser comes back with a smile. Yes.

From the cockpit, we watch cobra strikes yellow and blue light on the starboard horiz Against the display of lightning I hesitate to spe I'm aware of my faith in the integrity of the craft. I recognize the familiar, impetuous hurtl toward a void, a space to be filled only brie then to yawn again, hopeful and acquisitive.

Out over the Atlantic I lean forward and the captain how long he's been flying, wh routes he knows best. I think of the pengu two decks below, standing up on their toes a slamming flippers that once were wings agai the walls of their pens.

THE BULL MARKET IN FEAR

Stock speculation becomes the rule of prudence

By Ted C. Fishman

Early this summer, as the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose past 4,600, the securities industry gathered for its annual conference in New York City. Held in the New York Hilton, the event attracted systems analysts and risk managers—the people hired by securities firms and stock exchanges to keep their brokers and traders fortified with the most technologically sophisticated information about financial markets and their various risks. I expected to find a cocky, exhilarated crowd; after all, the stock market was up 20 percent for the first six months of the year, and paper profits at that point tallied some $700 billion, or twice as much as all the money Americans saved last year.

Instead, I found the men and women in their corporate ID tags and expensively nondescript suits strangely fearful, as if all the assets flowing into their companies' accounts offered no assurance against cataclysm. They worried that the volume and speed of the markets were growing so quickly that they didn't even know which information counted or which danger signs ought to be watched. The hundred or so vendors at the conference didn't provide comfort; each offered some customized, computerized control of risk, some flashier "fuzzy logic" filter for information. One service fed 400 newswires to a desktop. Another let you superimpose televised press conferences with CEOs on top of your computer spreadsheet.

Yet perhaps the most confounding product filled a gigantic screen at IBM's booth. It looked like a neon sea anemone, colored tentacles swaying in the electronic dark. When I asked the programmer standing nearby what it was, he said, "All the risk on the New York Stock Exchange." I studied the screen. Next to the anemone, colored balls of various sizes floated in space. "There are no numbers or words," I noted. "Yes!" said the programmer, happy that I had grasped an important concept. The image, he explained, represented 10,000 pages of text and figures; risk managers,

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WE KNOW THAT BEFORE WE RETIRE WE HAD BETTER ACCUMULATE $1 MILLION, OR $3 MILLION, OR MORE TO LIVE IN THE FUTURE

like chess grandmasters, could peer into it and know exactly where market threat lay. The programmer smiled with the exuberant calm man who holds a sorcerer's mirror. I wondered if it had curred to him, or to the others, that in chess one grandm ter always loses.

In the weeks following the convention, the market continued rise, breaking 4,600, then 4,700. The risk, it seemed, was on the ris well, especially for the investors who kept pouring in new money. In J alone, 7.9 billion new dollars flowed into American mutual funds, alm half of them into aggressive-growth equity funds, the kind that pres ably provide greater reward in return for greater volatility. Various ex nations were advanced: the economy was strong, the economy was w interest rates were low, exports were high, the dollar would strengt the dollar would weaken. But there is, I think, an explanation that dif entiates this bull market, the strongest of the decade so far, from the markets of the 1980s. Those markets rode on a certain Reaganesque o mism: people who had money were going to be allowed to make a more of it, at least for a while. This market runs on fear.

This fear, unhappily, is well known to me. Although I am a thi seven-year-old, white, Ivy League–educated, married man and thus any reckoning, enjoy nearly every advantage one may have in Ameri society, I do not expect, necessarily, to be able to retire with sufficient we to maintain my present standard of living. I belong to a generation that only is hooked on stock investing but also grudgingly embraces speculat as the last best hope against dying penniless.[1] We know that Social S rity is expected to go broke in 2029 (when I'm seventy-one); we know t by the time we are really sick, or sooner, Medicare will be gutted (by politicians we voted into office). We have little genuine faith, recent publican posturing aside, that the government will govern its own spe ing. And, like reminiscent exiles, we repeat the salient economic fact of generation: real salaries for the typical worker have declined since 19 We know that even our richest employers can no longer provide job secu (IBM, purveyor of the sea anemone, has "downsized" over one and a times more workers in the last four years—124,557—than it added in previous twenty.) We know that we had better fund our own 401-K pl because no one else will take care of us.[2] We know, as brokers never of pointing out, that in this century returns on stocks have far surpasse turns on bonds and bank deposits. We know that we had better accu late $1 million, or $3 million, or more (*how much?* whispers doubt, *how m more?*) to live in the future, when health care will be even more insa expensive, when one may need a great deal of money to avoid certain cietal unpleasantries, when tomorrow's dollar will be worth today's n el, when the century will belong to the Chinese.

Despite what the politicians tell us about the value of thrift and h work and the national debt, I see the stock market as the only way I possibly accumulate what I will need to retire. So, with 51 million ers, I'm a player. I invest in four mutual funds every month and h holdings in seven others, the mix of which I "adjust" occasionally.

[1] *You can barely walk through corporate offices without hearing talk of mutual funds their managers. Fidelity Investments, the firm that has captured more employee retire plans than any other, holding some $91 billion, is the hottest topic. In one big Chicag fice I visit regularly, spirits go up and down on the tides at Fidelity, and I know tha want a good reception there, I'm better off calling on a day when Fidelity's Mag Fund is up. At the very least, it provides a good way to start a conversation: people can't name their congressmen can talk at length about the manager of their fund.*

[2] *The number of traditional defined-benefit plans, in which companies are responsibl their employees' retirement investments, peaked in 1983 at about 175,000. Now ther about 99,000. In contrast, 401-K plans, which didn't exist until 1980, numbered 17 in 1984 and now exceed 120,000.*

Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population

And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the destruction of our environment, and to create an economy that will be **sustainable** over the very long term.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening environmental problems without coming to grips with their root cause -- overpopulation.

If present immigration and fertility rates continue, our population, now over 264 million, will pass 400 million by the year 2050 -- and still be growing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately be futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, but reverse it, so that our population can eventually be stabilized at a **sustainable** level -- far lower than it is today.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: **At what size should we seek to stabilize U.S. population?** Unless we know in what direction we should be headed, how can we possibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually stabilized is supremely important because of the effect of sheer numbers of people on such vitally important national goals as a healthy environment, and a sustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a U.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or about its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be reached in about three to four generations if we do two things now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. **Impose restrictions on immigration** that would halt illegal immigration, and cap legal immigration at not over 100,000 per year, including all relatives, refugees and asylees. That alone would sharply slow our growth.

2. **Lower our fertility rate** (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.0 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. **We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.**

Incentives to Lower Fertility

NPG proposes these incentives to motivate parents to have no more than two children:

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax exemption for dependent children born after a specified date.
- Give a Federal income tax credit **only** to those parents who have not more than two children. Those with three or more would lose the credit entirely.
- Give an annual cash grant to low income parents who pay little or no income tax, and who have no more than two children. Those with three or more children would lose the cash grant entirely.

Two Vastly Different Paths Lie Before Us

With the reductions in immigration and fertility we advocate, our nation could start **now** on the path toward a sustainable, and prosperous, population of 125 to 150 million.

Without such a program, we are almost certain to continue our mindless, headlong rush down our current path. That path is leading us straight toward catastrophic population levels that can only devastate our environment, and produce universal poverty in a crowded, polluted nation.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE.**

NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization founded in 1972. **We are the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and recommends specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

Negative Population Growth, Inc.

P.O. Box 1206, 210 The Plaza, Suite 7D, Teaneck, NJ 07666

I TRAMP FROM WISE MAN TO SORCERER TO HEAVENLY SIGN, GATHERING CLUES EACH MORE BEWILDERING THAN THE LAST. PERHAPS I AM A FOOL

longer is it surprising to me that Americans speculate more and save les than people in any other major industrialized country, or that an Ameri can is five times more likely to play the market today than in 1952. Fo many, as for me, the stock market is now a highbrow trip to Vegas, a cal culated risk in an ever riskier society, a last boat out of a post-postwa economy that is no longer creating jobs people can live on. Every da the collective wager grows. It is no wonder that peopl are looking for sorcerer's mirrors or sea anemones—any thing that will ensure success.

In July, when the Dow Jones average topped 4,736—the index forty-sixth record high of the year—I found myself thinking, somewha anxiously, of an acquaintance I'll call Paul Wiltz. Like me, Wiltz w once a trader on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. A windfall had ri ined him. In his first year of trading, before he knew much, luck mad him a fortune. After that he studied the market and always lost mone He used to meander through the stock-index pits of the Merc tellin anyone who'd listen that he was an ass. "Want to make money?" H would say. "Do the opposite of what I do. I buy, you sell. You'll be a go damn millionaire." Wiltz kept an index card in his pocket hand-printe with his inviolable trading rules, culled from a slew of books o market wizards (the bookshop windows in Chicago's financi district display little else). When Wiltz blew a trade, he scann his card, then scolded himself over the rules he had broken. H showed them to me once. *Buy low, sell high. Let profits run.* C *losses. Don't panic. Don't predict the market. The trend is yo friend.* When I pointed out that each rule contradicted the la Wiltz nodded and said, with genuine bitterness, "That's wh hate this job."



The new highs moved me to wonder which of Wiltz's rule should now heed. I could keep my money in stocks, either many companies or in just a few good ones; I could inv abroad or bring my money home; I could buy and hold or trust portfolio choices to hot mutual funds; I could shift bonds; I could prepay my mortgage; or, last—and in the view Wall Street wisdom, unutterably stupid—I could simply sit my cash. Like other investors, I balance my fears against greed, my distrust in easy money against my belief in the et nal upward movement of the market. Like others, I tramp fr sage to wizard to priest, gathering portents and signs, e more bewildering than the last, always believing that ahead a successful end. In other words, I am a fool.

Where there are fools, of course, someone is selling adv And it takes a lot of advice to manage the $6 trillion our nat bets on the market. Unbeckoned, the daily wisdom rushes e lessly into my home—economists, financiers, investment-h analysts, and financial reporters plying me with views as ear and conflicted as the word of God in Jerusalem or Delhi. Financial tel sion stations now claim three channels on my cable box. CNBC, the est of the national all-markets-all-the-time stations, begins *Before the* its premarket warm-up show, *four hours* before the opening clang at New York Stock Exchange. The stations exist to goad viewers into t ing—their sponsors depend on it. Ads for discount brokers fill e break: "Trade 2,000 shares of Microsoft for $20." And why not? The tions offer plenty of information to trade on. Stock, bond, and fut ticker tapes run across the TV screen continuously, even during the c mercials and O. J. trial updates. Indefatigable reporters rattle off stati and news like marathon tongue twisters. No arcana is beyond them jargon too unruly: "The two-year note for its part is up six ticks at par 30 with a yield of 5.97 percent . . ." CNBC's need for talk ensures

Illustrations by Joe

vers will hear every market strategy every day. The station hosts a stop parade of solemn guests from Wall Street firms, men willing and to say anything to explain the session's spikes and dips, passing off austive description as prescription, and all resolutely unapologetic n the market proves them wrong, even when it does so promptly, as equent. Of course, if the pros can change their minds, so can you. call Charles Schwab or Quick & Reilly.

y purveying all the Wall Street babble at once, the stations paradoxi- y free themselves from making sense of the market. Not that the fi- cial-news industry needs prescience, for it thrives well enough on nder; by definition, it *requires* blunder, even its own. The dynamic ex- ds far beyond the television stations; financial advice takes every n, from cheaply published stock newsletters (over five hundred of n, including a newsletter that ranks newsletters) to the perennial ks touting doomsday or newfangled pathways to wealth. *Money* maga- , perceiving my fears, recycles the same "get rich—don't die poor" ar- e every few months.[3] In my stack of issues, I count ninety-nine articles dlined with the word "now." Nor are the newspapers much better. Fi- cial reporters at the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* don't dict prices; instead they channel for Wall Street's top oracles, the ana- s at Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs. New York and Dallas have all-business radio stations, which is great if while driving you care to know the midday price of Eurodollar futures in London—which, I would say, is to know nothing.

would laugh at this absurdity, except that my money and there- my future is at risk (as is yours), and some of the analysts' mistakes e not been laughable at all. Nearly every "expert" was officially bull- just before the 1987 stock crash and every significant drop since, in- ding the mini-crash of August 1990. And nowhere do I see the bro- age houses disclosing that the two most enthusiastically hawked ket strategies of the last few years have devastated investors. The was the overselling of bonds, not as a long-haul investment but as a ky for speculative stocks, yet another way to substitute risk for disci- ed savings. Over the past ten years, brokerage firms learned to pitch ds the way they used to pitch stocks, as a vehicle for making trading fits. Since bond prices rise as interest rates fall, the long slide in s, capped by a rapid drop from 1991 to 1993, made bonds an easy . Speculators and conservative retirees alike grew accustomed to ns. But in 1994, bonds, an investment considered conservative for t of this century, proved as perilous as pork bellies. Just as investors red record amounts of money into bond funds (mutual funds whose es generally rise and fall conversely to interest rates), the bond mar- crashed. The *Wall Street Journal* planted its primroses in the fall of 3 and walked by them all the way past the six 1994 Federal Reserve erest rate hikes. Citing the best thinking by analysts, the paper's dit Markets column pronounced in its solemn tone that "long-term d yields are likely to meander in a narrow range for the next month wo because of continuing economic sluggishness . . ." The prediction ed on both counts. The economy strengthened, rates went up, and U.S. bond market suffered the worst collapse in its history, drain- investors' money in roughly the same amount as the October 1987 k market crash—about a trillion dollars.

ig, professional investment houses, such as Salomon Brothers and rge Soros's Quantum Fund, together lost billions. So did the rest of directly, in our own accounts, and indirectly, through the institutions speculate on our behalf: pension plans, local governments, and col- and charitable endowments. "Everyone has a vested interest in the

I DON'T SEE BROKERAGES DISCLOSING THAT THE TWO MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY HAWKED STRATEGIES OF THE LAST FEW YEARS DEVASTATED INVESTORS

the spirit of full disclosure, I should mention that I write regularly for Worth *magazine.*

IN THE WORLD OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION, BAD NEWS IS GOOD NEWS. WHY? IT CREATES A MARKET IN POST-CRASH INFORMATION

bond market," Jim Bianco of Arbor Trading Group in Barrington, Il
nois, told me in August. "It's pension funds, 401-K accounts, mut
funds, mortgage holders, governments, corporations, individuals. Wh
you add it all up, we're all bondholders." Only now, of course, is this l
son understood by the citizens of Orange County, California, whose
nancial overseers lost them $1.7 billion.

Another recent debacle for U.S. investors has been speculation in
developing world. From 1992 on, the wonders of "emerging marke
were touted in virtually every financial page, magazine, newsletter,
TV show. Budding economies, the argument went, helped U.S. inves
diversify away from their own mature markets. Between July 1993
January 1995, *Money* magazine extolled emerging-market investment
a multitude of articles, including a promising cover story, "Earn a L
15% on Your Money Now." Big money followed, with terrifying accel
tion. In 1993 and 1994, emerging-market stocks and bonds attrac
$150 billion from U.S. investors. At the peak of the frenzy, in 19
emerging-market stocks alone drew up to $6 billion a month in new
funds. Foreign companies eager to lap up American money let loo
fusillade of public-stock offerings equal only to the U.S. market's
biggest expansion, in the 1920s.



I took the bait. So did the world's largest institutiona
vestors. Pension funds typically invested around 9 percer
their total assets abroad, although those with more aggre
managers moved as much as a third of their money beyon
borders. Uncountable billions poured into emerging-marke
vestments. Mexico, the darling of Wall Street, described b
professional suitors as the most promising and stable econor
the developing world, lured the most: $28 billion. As late a
December, Wall Street's top firms—J. P. Morgan, Bear Ste
Smith Barney, and Bankers Trust—rhapsodized about M
loudly and publicly. Three weeks later, just as U.S. emer
market investment peaked, the Mexican economy collapse
flating its own stock market by 42 percent and triggering
sales in the world's other emerging markets. Far from de
strating the power of diversification, the shock waves, tagge
"tequila effect," demonstrated just how highly integrate
world market has become: when Mexico crashed, Asian
followed, the U.S. and Canadian dollars plummeted, an
U.S. stock and bond markets sank, too.

Yet in the world of financial information, all this bad
was good news. Why? It created a market in post-crash inf
tion. Money rushing out of a formerly hot market has
somewhere, and now that an investor can change the sh
his entire portfolio with a single phone call to a mutua
company, the industry must always stand ready with cl
The proliferation of these choices has become yet another
nale for the proliferation of financial information. As
year, there were 5,357 mutual funds vying for investor interest in e
nancial niche. Twenty million households invest in at least one o
funds, and many invest in three or more. And last year 800 nev
sprang up. Want to invest in high-tech stocks, rust-belt industrie
stocks, Burmese start-ups, or storefront software firms in Russia? Th
fund for you. Funds lucky enough to get promoted in national fi
magazines get swamped by new money, even though a recent stud
funds rated by *Money*, *Kiplinger's*, *Business Week*, and *Forbes* fou
these ratings had no predictive power at all. The average stock
fund churns 95 percent of its portfolio each year, ever reaching
next big winner. Most often it fails.

The managers of these funds, once anonymous bean counters in
corporate offices, have been recast over the last ten years into cel

ered as long as their luck holds, discarded like yesterday's NFL superstar hey go bad in the knees. Yet in reality only one in three beats the ad market average in a given year, and only a handful ever have done year in and year out.[4] Even more telling is the fact that half the top funds in a given year number among the *worst* funds within ten years. her than hunting for talented fund managers, we might be better off king managers we think will be just plain lucky. In fact, statisticians would tell us that it would take 105 years of data to know if a manager who consistently beat the market by 2 percent were really smarter than anyone else.

While analysts hawk every up and down tick of the averages, ll Street lures our national wealth another way: by suggesting that we no attention to the prognosticators and the flow of information. The thing counsel goes like this: Concentrate on your day job, play golf in- ad of churning your portfolio, tell your broker to call only once a year, l your million will build inexorably. In other words, buy and hold.

The promise, we're assured, is supported by forty years of Nobel ze–winning work that began with Harry Markowitz's blueprint for rtfolio theory." In 1952, Markowitz, an economist, proposed that in- tors could minimize their risk by stringing many separately risky in- tments together as long as the individual investments did not lose at same time. Portfolio theory remained just that until 1976, when two er economists, Roger Ibbotson and Rex Sinquefield, produced data to w how the "risky" stock market put more "conservative" investments, bonds and bank deposits, to shame. The data, known as the "Ibbot- numbers," have since been updated through 1994. They show that a lar invested continually in bonds since 1926 would be worth $26, le a dollar invested in a broad-based portfolio of large-company stocks uld be worth an astonishing $810. A dollar invested in a diversified tfolio of small companies would have grown to $2,843. The chart of data, sold by Professor Ibbotson's consulting firm, hangs in nearly ry investment office in the country. The firm also sells mugs and T- ts with the numbers on them. They move nicely, too.

bbotson's results make saving money in traditional bank accounts look ly smarter than throwing it away. Speculating in the stock market, by trast, promises that even a pittance, spread among stocks and hoarded years, will burgeon like fruit flies. The wonder of the Ibbotson data t lost on Wall Street, where the big brokerage firms have devoted the ten years to confusing investors with the numbers. "We at Merrill ch had a huge educational effort delivering the Ibbotson data to nts and saying, 'This is real,'" one of the company's top strategists told in May. Merrill Lynch's big competitors, A. G. Edwards & Sons and n Witter Reynolds, did likewise. But hearing the buy-and-hold pitch n a commission house is a bit like learning about Christianity from a doo priest. He can mouth the gospel, but he's selling dolls and pins. hough the big firms make the long-term case for equities, their mar- ing creates, then preys on, a confusion between buying and holding a rsified portfolio over time and just being in the market. The Ibbotson a supports only holding stocks, not trading them, yet when a broker s and says, "Our guy likes . . . ," he is hoping desperately that we'll for- about this and place a buy or sell order. And we do.

ter Lynch, the most successful mutual fund manager of our time, is famous for rack- up 29 percent annual returns for the Magellan Fund before he quit in 1990, in the ntime turning his wife's $3,000 IRA account into a million-dollar nest egg. Once the industry's chief figurehead, he now argues that individuals, flying solo, can beat the . Thus does he feed investors' fantasies and continue their dependence upon him, a In two best-selling books, Lynch advises small investors to do their own research. The to start? Look for the busy stores at the mall. Thousands follow Lynch's advice, and oubt many make bigger market bets than they would otherwise make.

HEARING THE BUY-AND-HOLD PITCH FROM A COMMISSION HOUSE IS LIKE LEARNING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY FROM A VOODOO PRIEST

IN A CRASH, THE FINANCIAL MEDIA WILL SMOOTHLY EXCRETE EXPLANATIONS, PROGNOSTICATIONS, AND TAKE-ADVANTAGE STRATEGIES

But in fact the long-term data sells fantasy: investments not subject t taxes, inflation, transaction costs, or the temptation to touch one's mon ey or spend even a cent of dividend earnings. (If the data correctly re flected the returns on a reasonably diversified portfolio of stock, billion aire investors would be overrunning the supermarket aisles. In reality, fe buy-and-hold investors make eight hundred or two thousand times the money. Only one investor appeared on the Forbes 1994 list of the fou hundred richest Americans on the strength of his stock portfolio: Warre Buffett, whose success—as rude as it may be to point this out—may be a much a function of pure probability as of his legendary accounting skills Researchers at Ibbotson Associates recently reran their numbers, applyin a typical set of costs that drag on a portfolio, such as inflation, commi sions, and taxes (but not investors' need for cash). Th $810 increase shrinks to a measly $20.05. We can be sur the brokerages won't be pushing this information.

The other ostensibly inviolate tenet Wall Street promotes is tha "the market always goes up." Empirically, the stock market of the last sixt years has outperformed all rivals, even when returns are adjusted for cost And it has climbed steadily up, albeit with intermittent blips. The last te years have seen its longest and fattest bull run ever. But for a skeptic, eve that evidence may not be good enough. The big picture over time mea little to an investor squeezed for money during a downturn. A stock in vestor poised to retire on the strength of his portfolio in 1929 had to su vive the market until 1953 *just to break even*. Retirees and parents of colle students who depended on stock profits to meet bills in 1969 would n have made a cent until nine years later. Since 1926 there have been seve periods in which investors suffered losses over five straight years. The sto market earned back the trillion dollars it lost in 1987 within two years, b for whom? Not for the people who were wiped out by the crash.

The optimism stirred by historical data neglects the fact that the ma ket can plunge ruinously at any time. Does risk lessen if you invest whe you're young? Possibly. But as economist Paul Samuelson has pointed ou all that time spent waiting for your portfolio to recover from a crash also time spent waiting for more crashes. Market optimism is based on th logical fallacy that the recent past portends what is to come. But the sam ple numbers are limited and include history's one example of postw American capitalism. Put another way, does it really seem likely th 1995 data will be germane to investors fifty years from now? John Ma nard Keynes admonished, famously, "The long run is misleading guide to current affairs. In the long run, we a all dead."

Fair enough. But the horror is to be flat broke before you die. Th is what all the financial advice is whispering: *You don't want to run out money before you run out of breath.* It would be nice to believe the poli cians' rhetoric about savings and thrift and governmental spending, b in the real world we are the authors of our own futures. With this mind, I could not help but notice that as the Dow Jones avera zigzagged near its record high in August, some of the pundits were sayi that it was time to *buy*. No doubt a lot of people confidently follow this advice. At the time of this writing, the Dow stands at 4,725, up percent for the year. By now, when you are reading these words, t market may be higher or may have suffered a mild "correction," eve "crash." In any event, the financial media will smoothly excrete exp nations and prognostications and take-advantage strategies. And, giv the choices, people will keep pouring into the casino. The only alter tive is to ride a downdraft in the standard of living. Unasked is what price will be, who will pay it, and when. Risk be damned, retirement feared; this is the way we live now.

THE CHROMIUM HOOK

By Ron Carlson



JACK CRAMBLE

body knows this, that
illed in the drive-
nd I found the hook
I went around to
door. It was caught
door handle, hang-
here like I don't
what. I didn't know
it was at first, but
Jill got out she
, and she started
ming, for which I
blame her. Her fa-
ame out and made
here had we been
id we know it was
one o'clock. He's a
guy, but under real
re, I guess, since his wife had
oubles. Anyway, he looks at
ook, and then he looks Jill
eal good, suspicious-like, like
been up to something, which
initely had not. We had been,
as everybody knows, up at Conversation Point with our debate files, and the time got away from us. I was helping her with her arguments, asking questions, like that, things like, "What are the drawbacks of an international nuclear-test-ban treaty?" And she would fish around in her file box and try to find an answer. Her one shot at college is the debate team, and their big meet with Northwoods was a week from that Saturday. It was Mr. Royaltuber who called the police, and the word got out.

JILL ROYALTUBER

It was the scaredest I've ever been, and when I think of how close that homicidal maniac came to getting us and doing whatever he was going to do with that big vicious hook, my blood runs cold. Jack was really brave. He wanted to get out of the car after we heard the first noises, the scrapings, and see what it was, but I wouldn't let him. Sometimes boys just don't have any sense. We'd already heard about the escaped homicidal maniac on the radio. They'd interrupted Wild Johnny Hateras's Top Twenty Country Countdown with the news bulletin that some one-armed madman had escaped the loony bin on Demon Hill and was sort of armed and dangerous. And of course Discussion

rlson is the author of the short-story
e on Plan B for the Middle Class
n i). His last story for Harper's Mag-
"Zanduce at Second," appeared in
y 1994 issue.

n by David Sandlin

Point is right there by the iron fence of the nuthouse. We had gone up to Discussion Point to work through some problems I'd been having since my mom left, and Jack was talking to me about being strong and saying he'd be there for me and not to get too depressed and to look on the sunny side of things, that Mom was better off in the hospital—she certainly seemed happier. So Jack was being that thing, supportive, which I love. A boyfriend who is captain of football is one thing, and a boyfriend who is captain of football and supportive is another. But I kept him from getting out of the car after we heard the noises. The wind had come up a little and it was dark as dark, and I said, "Let's just get out of here." Jack wasn't afraid. He wanted to stay. But I told him it was late, and then we heard the scratching closer, against the car, and it felt like it was right on my bare spine. "Pull out!" I yelled, and he gunned the engine of his Ford—it's a wonderful car, which he did all the work on—and we headed for home.

DR. STEWART NARKENPIE,
DIRECTOR, THE SPINARD
PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE

It is not a loony bin. It is not a nuthouse or a funny farm. It's not even an insane asylum. It is, as I've been telling everyone in this community for the twenty-two years I've lived here, the Spinard Psychiatric Institute, a center for the treatment of psychological disorders. It is a medical hospital, the building and grounds of which occupy just under 200 acres on the top of Decatur Hill, and it employs thirty-eight citizens from the lovely town of Griggs, including Mr. Howard Lugdrum, who was injured seriously in last week's incident. I have spoken to the Rotary Club once a year for forever, as well as to the Lions and the Elks and the Junior Achievement and the graduating class of the high school and the Vocational Outreach in the Griggs Middle School, explaining what we do and how we do it and that the Spinard Psychiatric Institute is not a loony bin or any other kind of bin, and I am not getting through. It is not a bin! Even though a large portion of our community has had family and friends enter the Institute as patients only to be returned to the community after treatment in better shape than before, and even though most everybody has visited the grounds—if not for personal reasons, then certainly at our annual Community Picnic on the South Lawn—there still persists this incurable sense that once you pass under the Spinard stone arch you are entering the twilight zone. Yes, we do have a big iron fence, because some of our patients get confused and could possibly wander away, and yes, the buildings, some of them, have bars over the windows for the safety of our patients, and some of our patients wear restraints when out-of-doors, but they are dangerous to no one but themselves. I cannot say how weary I am of setting the record straight. It is not a nuthouse, and I am not a mad scientist. We don't have any mad scientists, mad professors, or mad doctors. No one's mad. We don't use that term. We do have some disturbed patients, but we're treating them, and there is a chance—with rest, counseling, and medication—that they will get better. We do not perform operations except as they become medically necessary. We had an appendectomy last fall. We do not operate on the brain. We do not—as the high school paper suggests regularly—do brain transplants, dissections, or enlargements. Most recently I had to speak with Wild Johnny Hateras at KGRG, the radio station in Griggs, about the prank news bulletin on Halloween, which is just the kind of thing that keeps any understanding between our Institute and the town in tatters and is responsible, I think, for the harm resulting from last Saturday's incident, about which we've heard so much.

MR. HOWARD LUGDRUM

It hurt. Don't you think that hurt? Everybody talks about the kids: oh, they were scared, they were frightened and nervous, oh, they were terrified. Well, think about it—had two trespassers yanked off *their* prosthesis? In the course of doing their job, were either of *them* pulled from their feet and dragged till an arm came off, and left there tumbling in the dirt? As it turns out, I was lucky I was wearing my simple hook and the straps broke; if I'd been wearing my regular armature, those two little criminals would have dragged me to deat and we'd have murder here instead reckless endangerment.

ROD BUDDAROCK

If anybody, one person, says anythi one thing, about my buddy Jack Cra ble being up there at Passion Point do anything, one thing, besides h little Jill Royaltuber with family pr lems, such as they are, I'll find th person and use his lying butt to wi up Main Street. I'm not joking he I know Jack from being co-captain football, and I know what I'm sayi Of course, he could have come to t team party out at the Landing, b here was a girl who had some tr bles, and he was there to help. Ther been a lot of talk about what th were really doing. Jack made th crack about debate, which was t bad, because he couldn't get with two miles of the debate team—I'n better debater than Jill and Jack p together—but he only said that protect Jill's reputation, such as it She's a nice girl, but a little confus It was only last year that her m went bonkers, and Jill herself wen little nuts about that time, but she no slut. If anybody, one person, s anything about Jill Royaltuber be a wide-mouthed, round-heeled sl I'll find that person and trouble v certainly rain down upon his or h head like hot shit from Mars.

MR. HOWARD LUGDRUM

I'd seen the car before. It's a two-d Ford, blue and white. There are five six cars I see there by our north fe in the pine grove. They bring th girlfriends up from town in the g weather, and we find the empty b bottles and condoms. The kids cal Passion Point. We had a timed li system there until a few years ago, the Environmental Protection Age asked us to dismantle it because of Weaver's bat, a protected species t hunts there at night. The deal ab the parking is that the grove is property and we stand liable for harm. Two kids climb in the backs of some old clunker with a faulty haust and the Institute would be s until the thirteenth of never. I me these are kids at night in old c What we've done is put the grove

e watchman's tour, and one of us
kes the big flashlight and shines it on
few bare butts every night of the
eek. Until last week, it's been kind of
nny—I mean, you see some white
ar end hop up, and then the cars
art up and wheel out like scurrying
ts. Once interrupted, they don't
me back. Until the next night. Like
aid, these are kids.
I'm in charge of buildings and grounds
the Institute, and I like my work
ere; it's been a good place to me.

SHERIFF CURTIS MANSARACK

he most frequently asked question
"When you bust a beer bust, do
ou keep the beer?" For Pete's sake.
very weekend I roust one or two of
ese high school beer parties, most
ten on the hill or down at Ander's
anding. Sometimes, though,
ere'll be a complaint and I'll be
lled to a private residence. A lot of
ese kids know me by now, and
ey know that about eleven-thirty
d Sheriff Mansarack will slip up in
s cruiser and flash the lights long
ough for every drunk sophomore
run into the bushes so that I can
te the two or three seniors too
unk to flee.
I was in the middle of such a raid
st Saturday night, Halloween, a
ight when I know for a sure fact
at there is going to be trouble, and
got the call from Oleena Weenz,
ur dispatcher. There had been, in
er words, a "vicious assault by a per-
ert," and she directed me to the ad-
ess on Eider Street where I found
Mr. Rick Royaltuber and the two
oung people and heard the story. I
new the boy, Jack Cramble, and
ad seen him play football earlier
at night when Griggs beat Bark
ity, and I was kind of surprised that
e wasn't down with the rest of the
eam drinking beer at the Landing. I
lso knew Mr. Royaltuber, as I had
ken the call when his wife went off
he deep end a year ago. When a guy
elps you subdue his wife and pries
er fingers off a rusty pair of kitchen
issors while you hold her kicking
nd screaming on your lap on the
ont porch in front of all the neigh-
ors, you remember him. That was a
ad deal, embarrassing for me to get
aught off guard. I mean, she looked

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normal. I hadn't seen the scissors. And it was bad for old Royaltuber too, with her shrieking out about him porking what's her name, the wife of old Dr. Dizzy up at the loony bin, and rattling those scissors at us. Hey, sometimes kitchen tools are the worst. And she was strong.

Anyway, I spoke to Mr. Royaltuber and I saw the hook there on the car door. It was a regular artificial arm, straps and all, one of them torn, and it scared me too. I mean, when that thing came off, it had to hurt. I took the report, but it wasn't all in line, and to tell the truth neither was the front of the Royaltuber girl's shirt. She was misbuttoned the way you are after putting away your playthings in a hurry.

The Cramble boy kept at me to get back up there right away before the pervert got somebody else, saying things like, Wasn't I the sheriff? Wasn't I supposed to do something? Well, I could see *he* wanted to do something, something that had been interrupted up at Passion Point, so I just told them all it was going to be all right, which it was, and I headed back to the Landing, where I was able to run off about ten kids and confiscate a case and a half of Castle Moat, which is not my favorite, but it'll do.

MR. HOWARD LUGDRUM

I never married. Years ago, after my accident, I changed my plans about a career in tennis and went up to college near Brippert and got into their vocational-ed program in hotel management.

I was pretty numbed out after Cassie's family moved who knows where. This is a long time ago now. Her girlfriend Maggie Rayne hung around with me for a while, and then I think she saw the limits of a man with one hand and moved on. Her father was a professor at the medical school, and I was clearly outclassed. So, anyway, I never married. I didn't realize the torch was still lit—or really how alive I could feel—until I saw Cassie again a year ago, when she was carried up here kicking and screaming, spitting and cursing, her eyes red and her hair wild, the most beautiful thing I've seen in, let's see, seventeen years.

MRS. MARGARET RAYNE NARKENPIE

I had not planned on a mountaintop in Bushville. I had not actually thought that I would—after seven years of graduate study and three years at the Highborn Academy—find myself banished to the left-hand districts of Forsaken Acres, dressing for dinner at the macaroni-and-cheese outlet, opting for the creamed tuna on special nights. I had lived in the wasteland as a girl, and I thought I was through with it. Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that marrying the highest-ranking doctor in my father's finest class, a tall, good-looking psychiatrist of sterling promise who could have written his ticket anywhere in the civilized world, I was expecting to live in a place where there was more than one Quicky Freeze and a Video Hut. I had dared to think London, New York, even Albuquerque. I had not imagined Griggs. No one has imagined Griggs. My husband—who has his Institute and his staff and his many duties and all his important vision for psychiatric health care—can't even see Griggs. So, the way I live here and whom I associate with in this outpost of desolation is, it would seem to me, my business.

Mr. Royaltuber handles all the television and monitor maintenance and repair for the Spinard Institute. He has also helped us with the satellite dish and the cable connections we use at home. He's a nice man, and I have lunch with him from time to time. We've become, under the circumstances and in this barren place, friends. I met his wife only once, when I was at his home. It was less than pleasant.

MR. WILD JOHNNY HATERAS, RADIO PERSONALITY, KGRG

If anybody pretends to be hurt or surprised by our little prank, they're bad actors. Everybody in this burg knows what we do on Halloween with the "important news bulletin" and the hook. We've been doing it since I started spinning platters here twelve years ago. Nick goes out and slips a dozen of the phony hooks on car doors, and then I interrupt the program with my announcem about the maniac. I think of it as little annual contribution to b control, all those kids jumping when I cut into "Unchai Melody" with my homicide-a hook news brief. When we star we used those plastic hooks from costume shop in Orpenhook, i sad to say, gang, it's impossibl scare anybody anymore with a p tic hook. Don't tell *me* the worl better place. So now we get then Bark City, little steel hooks tha least look authentic for a few m utes. But this will probably be last year we send Nick out with thing at all, because of the tro up by the nuthouse, and because afraid of getting shot. Can you lieve that shit? You go out on H loween to have a little fun anym and you run a good chance of get plugged? Hey, Griggs, wake up, a not well. If you can't harass teenagers without running the ris getting killed, this town is in trou

MRS. CASSIE ROYALTUBER

It's funny about what people th You try to put a pair of kitchen s sors in the doctor's wife one af noon and they think a) you're cr or b) you're desperately in love v your sweet husband, or c) you ca her in bed with your husband, v whom she's been sleeping for years, and therefore you're just s to catch on, since everybody, solutely everybody else in this lage, which is not exactly full of niuses, has known about the a since the first week, or d) that yo all three: crazy, in love, and slo catch on.

Well, it is simply exhilaratin be liberated from a) the slings an the arrows of public opinion an take it for what it is, which is a relevant and b) as absolutely w as it can be.

Who in their right mind—wh is where I find myself—would c sider that the television repairm wife might have another reas Who would grant the past its the vast sweeping privilege of his and justice? Who would guess tha I knew Mrs. Narkenpie before and her doctor moved to Grigg

ct before she was Mrs. Narkenpie, nen she was simply Margaret ayne, and that b) she was the ime reason I had been forcibly re-oved from my one true love so any years ago, and that c) I had osen the scissors not for the con-nience of their being right there in e drawer but because they were ap-opriate—I wanted to cut her the ay she cut my Howard.

And the things I screamed I reamed on purpose. How are you ing to get into the loony bin un-ss they think you're loony?

ROD BUDDAROCK

What he does is take the beer. This ems to be his only deal as a cop, drive around on weekends and ke beer from kids. And he keeps e beer. Some kids just go ahead d buy his brand, which is the Ro-ry Red Ale—fifteen dollars a case any Ale and Mail. Isn't there any ime to stop? How do you get a job ke that—free car and free beer? ey, I'll sign up. As is, I'm glad I'm senior and out of here next spring. e comes into our Halloween party st Saturday, the same night that ere's a maniac with a hook roam-g all over Griggs, attacking kids, ashing at everything in sight, and e busts us, scaring everybody shit-ss and causing Ardeen Roster to reak her nose running away in the shes, and he writes *me* a ticket for . Then, while some monster with ne arm has practically taken over e whole town, he takes our beer, d there's still about three and a alf cases of Red Pelican—which ou have to drive to Orpenhook to ven find—so I'm forced to live the st of my life picturing this civic art pounding down our Pelicans very afternoon on his deck while e dreams up his next law enforce-ent strategy. Life is hard on the oung, man, count on it.

MR. HOWARD LUGDRUM

'm going to need to get my hook ack. There's a lot of work up here at requires two hands. We've got aves to rake, tons, and a lot of oth-r seasonal preventive mainte-ance—storm windows, snowplow rep work—and I can't load and de-liver firewood effectively without my prosthesis. I'd appreciate its return as soon as possible.

MR. RICK ROYALTUBER

Cassie was never even cranky all these years. I mean, of all people, she's the last I'd expect to crack up. It was tough to send her off. It hurt me to put her up on the hill, but there it was, we couldn't deny she'd lost control of her senses when she tried to harm Mrs. Narkenpie. How do you think I feel knowing she's up there, locked up in a nuthouse night and day, wearing a straitjacket or what have you. But the doctor said it was for the best, and I believe him. These things, so many of them, are beyond ordinary folks.

SHERIFF CURTIS MANSARACK

Incidental to my call on the Royaltubers' Halloween night, I had the Cramble boy pop open his trunk, and I found the following:

- nylon rope, 100 yards
- hammer
- hatchet
- power screwdriver
- small grappling hook
- duct tape, two rolls
- canvas, 12 x 12
- flashlights, two
- pepper spray, two canisters
- bolt cutters
- Doritos, large bag, taco-flavored

JILL ROYALTUBER

I never saw his face. I never saw anything really. All I heard was some vibrations, I guess—maybe footsteps in the leaves, and then a kind of metallic clicking like scritch, scritch, and I was begging Jack to pull out, to just pull out of there. We hadn't been doing anything. Jack had hurt his hand in the game against Bark City, and I had been massaging that. We were trying to relax.

MRS. CASSIE ROYALTUBER

I loved Howard from Moment Number One, when we met seventeen years ago, on the night of the construction of our high school's homecoming float, which was a big ram. We were the Cragview Rams. He and I were part of the tissue brigade, two dozen kids handing Kleenex each to each in a

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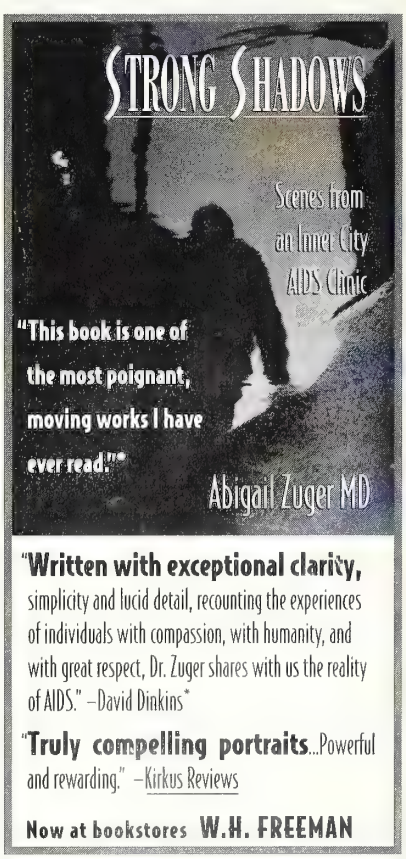
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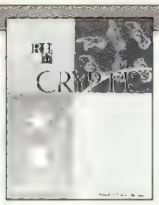
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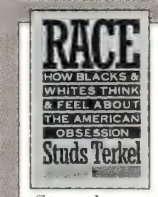
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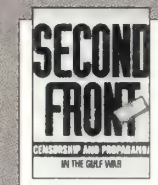
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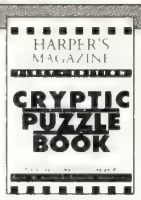
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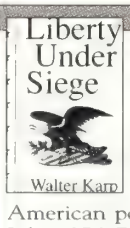
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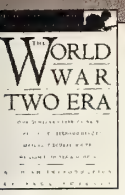
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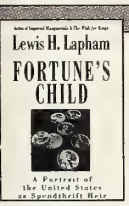
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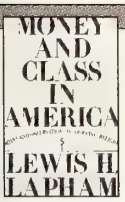
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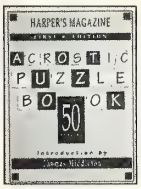
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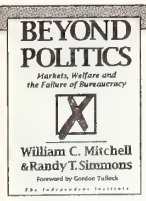
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[illegible] ended at the chicken-wire sculpture, which slowly filled with the red, white, and blue paper. He was standing next to me and our hands touched once a second as the tissue flowed through us, my left hand, his right hand, which he would lose that spring, touch, touch, touch. He was the first tender boy I ever knew, and I was happy when he invited me to the homecoming dance. There is no need to explain every delicate step of that fall, Moment Number Two and Moment Number Three, except to say that when we gave our hearts, we gave our hearts completely, and everything else followed. It was the year I died and went to heaven for a while.

Moment Number Four I discovered that I was pregnant, and even that seemed magical, until my father found out thanks to my jealous classmate, wicked Maggie Rayne, who also told him that Howard and I always met after school in the Knopdish junkyard. And it was there, during Moment Number Five, that my father found us in the rear seat of an old VW van, which had been like a haven for us, and he yanked me out onto the ground and slammed that rusty door forever, or so I thought, on my one good thing—Howard Lugdrum.

Howard, I heard, lost his arm in the "accident," and my father moved us far away, here to Griggs. The Moments now go unnumbered. Before the summer was over, young, handsome Ricky Royaltuber was coming round, and I didn't care, I did my part. I wasn't even there, and I guess I've been away a long time.

I didn't care when Maggie Rayne moved to town with her fancy doctor, and I didn't care that she went after and got Ricky. It freed me in a way. I can hardly remember who came and went in our house—Jill's friends, neighbors, boys.

But when I heard that the stars had relented and uncrossed and again lined up my way, that Howard had come to Griggs, working at this very loony bin in which I now live, I woke up, and in a major way. Afternoons, he comes in with a cup of tea, and we sit and he lets me hold it while we talk. These days are sweet days again, full of sweet moments. Even now I can see him through these bars, cleaning the windows of the van with the big circles of his left hand.

Jack Cramble

I don't care who knows it now: I was going to spring her. Last year, when I was a nobody from nowhere, she was the only person in town who would listen. I was the new kid in town then, not captain of the football team, and she was always there for me. I told her everything. It was easier and better than talking to my own folks, and she was different, a woman, more woman than anybody I'll ever meet again. I loved her and I loved the way she talked, putting my problems in perspective a, b, c, or 1, 2, 3. To keep seeing her I started dating that dipweed Jill, who has been nothing but a pain in the neck with all her "sharing," "caring," and "daring." Such a girl. Such a needy little girl. Just thinking about her makes my skin crawl. Let's go up to the Point, she'd say, so she could crawl all over me. I'll tell you flat, she knows nothing about being a real woman like her mother. We went up there on Halloween after the game so I could scope out the fence and the approach to Cassie's room. The plan was for midnight. Of course, Jill jumped me when we parked, and lucky for me the watchman came along or I'd have had to go all the way. As it was, her pants were already to her ankles, and he got a hell of a view of her bare ass in the window.

But it hasn't deterred me. Cassie and I are meant to be together, that's clear, regardless of the age difference. I'm going back up there in a night or two and busting her out. Football season's over, and it's time to be me. My heart knows what to do, and it says, Scale the wall, break her out!

Mr. Howard Lugdrum

She was here almost a year before she told me. Though I knew instantly we'd pick up where we left off, my heart steady through the years to the one woman I loved, Cassie waited to be sure it was still me, I guess, that a man with one arm could be trusted. So last week we were at tea in he[r] room after her counseling session and she looked at me funny and tol[d] me something amazing: I have a daughter! A daughter! Havin[g] Cassie back in my life after so lon[g] seemed almost too much for me t[o] bear, and now . . . a child. Well, not [a] child but a young woman. And Cassie told me, I could see her if I went by the north pine grove some time after nine that night, Hal[l]oween. I'd see a blue and white For[d] and my daughter would be in it! I was all I could do to get the afternoon hours out of the way; it was waiting like no waiting I have eve[r] known. My daughter! As it hap[-]pened, I don't know if I saw her o[r] not, just somebody's butt in th[e] moonlight.

Sheriff Curtis Mansarack

Fall in Griggs is a good thing: th[e] leaves change color and there's foot[-]ball and the smell of the first wood[-] fires. Halloween's my last big chanc[e] to score a beer bust, and I almos[t] never miss. I didn't miss this year. Every year there's a hook, sometime[s] more than one, and it takes a week or two for things to quiet down. I don't mind the hooks; the waxed windows are worse. I'd trade the waxed windows for two more hooks. Soon it will snow and life gets rea[l] easy: there's no cop better than ol[d] Jack Frost.

Person Behind Last Tree in the Twilight

At night, as I drift through these woods, I tap my hook from time to time against my leg and the feel of the hard iron spurs me on past fence and fern, past drooping branches and the cobbed underbrush. What I need is an older model American car parked alone in the dark, one with a grip handle that I can snare. The lift handles are no good, and everything anymore has the aerodynamic lift handles. I want a '60 Fairlane or a '58 Chevrolet, a car with bench seats big enough for two young people to get comfortable and tangle up their clothing and their brainwaves so that they forget the dark, the woods, the person with a hook, every Halloween, approaching through the leaves. ■

NEW FLASH FROM AN OLD ISLE

Kazuo Ishiguro's latest novel exhibits Britain's literary vigor

By Vince Passaro

Not long ago, a "rumor" was reported by that official organ of Anglo-American culture, *The New Yorker*, that Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie had fallen out over the literary merits and lasting significance of the work of Samuel Beckett. Being an American audience, we weren't told which of them believed in Beckett and which didn't; the anecdote sat in the midst of the piece, a profile of Amis, just to show us how serious these English writers are.

Indeed, they are serious. Such a snippet of literary gossip about two American writers would never see the light of day in the United States, this kind of issue being unimaginable as a point of dispute here in any case. And as far as I am aware, there are no two American writers whose friendship is perceived as important enough for such a falling-out to matter. Unlike in England, where the writing community has its detectable sensibilities, fights, and traditions, there is no public perception—nor is there a literary perception—of a community of writers in the United States. In fact, there is an almost complete lack of public discourse among our writers about the direction of American literature, or even its nature. And so what becomes most interesting to American writers and readers about the English literary scene is that they have one, and we don't.

At the same time I was pondering this anomaly, I heard from a friend about a fellow writer, a well-known and much-admired American novelist and memoirist, who complained bitterly when another novelist wrote a negative review of his work. It was the maligned writer's belief that one writer should never say anything bad about another. This infantile conviction goes to the core of American literature's currently reduced circumstances: that a "writer" cannot also be a critic; and, perhaps more frightening, that there ought not be such a thing as criticism, life being hard enough. That a sophisticated man of letters should believe this nonsense shows how far from our senses we have been led by the long-standing and now widely emulated *New York Times Book Review* method of literary journalism, in which indifferently selected writers puff each other so that they too shall be puffed. (New leadership at the *Review* has encouraged hope for many improvements, including an end to this practice, and in the past couple of months there have been some tough reviews.) As far as most writers are concerned, there is only a limited pool of money, not much public goodwill, and a small number of teaching gigs out there—so who needs enemies? If writers in the United States ally themselves with one another or oppose one another on literary grounds, no one gets to know about it. There are very few serious writers in America willing to discuss issues of



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Illustration by Steve Brodner

literary merit, literary failure, or, most avoided, literary genius. Discussion rarely gets past "so-and-so's book"—as in, "I thought so-and-so's new book was quite good" or "I thought it wasn't so-and-so's best book . . ." Beyond that, every reader is an island.

In making such a broad comparison, it is tempting to say that British literature has not yet been fully suppressed by the sheer force of marketing. In the United States, 5,000-odd fiction and poetry titles are published each year, not to mention the countless accompanying biographies, memoirs, and books of essays, all arriving carton upon carton in the megastores wherever professionals live, work, and breed. Optimum unit flow requires that no real criticism take place and that reviewing be perceived largely as consumer assistance. The slenderness of a writer's chance to have an impact, or even to be read, has a pacifying effect. Writers have come to *believe* in the market, though in their usual resentful way—which is to say that although very few believe a book will be recognized for its merits, most are perfectly convinced that if their publishers "get behind" their book and give it good "buzz," it can sell widely. It's not a state of mind that encourages criticism, standards, or much experimentation.

Furthermore, British and American writers face very different geographies: literary life in the United States has come to resemble army life in the decades of the Indian Wars; our literary production takes place at the outposts, by frontiersmen holding down the forts at the University of Kansas, the University of Florida at Gainesville, Arizona State.[1] Though plenty of English writers live outside the city, and a number must teach in the lesser-known universities, the center of letters in Britain is still utterly fixed in London. And it is London—with its half-dozen or more weekly opinion magazines and book sections, its lock on the publishing business, its cultural sway, and its political centrality—that stands in the imaginations of Americans as *the* place where British literary life occurs. We do not imagine New York in the same way: New York, we would be correct to imagine, is the place where the publishing parties to which writers have a hard time getting invited occur.

The net effect of all these differences on informed American readers is to convince them that something coherent is happening to British literature while nothing large or even visible seems to be happening right now to our own. There is a sense, too, that most younger American novelists, with a few exceptions (Richard Powers, Mary Gaitskill, Denis Johnson, and David Foster Wallace), continue to rely on a traditional and ever more polished realism, whereas the British have shown a distinctly modern and experimental inclination. In the 1960s and 1970s, the positions seemed to be reversed; my own sense of British writers before the late 1970s led me to believe that the dominant British approach to the novel was traditional in narrative form and took for its subject either Village Life in a Disappearing England or dinner parties. It seems that while I was reading Muriel Spark, England's younger literary aspirants were paying attention to the rather more jagged and forceful styles of J. G. Ballard and Angela Carter.

Whatever its origins, there has been a frank intellectual bent to British fiction over the past fifteen years or so and an open attempt to do new things either in subject matter or language. In English novels, language is social and political, a signifier in the dynamic struggle between mass democratic institutional ideology and the unyielding British consciousness of class. These days in England there are writers of an explicitly Oxbridge, Edwardian persuasion and there are more down-and-dirty types who wish explicitly to reject that voice and point of view, even if some of them actually come from the same Oxbridge upper-class milieu. A. S. Byatt, V. S. Naipaul, and Julian Barnes make fairly good representatives of the first group; Martin Amis, Jeannette Winterson, and Will Self are examples of the second. In the same moment, England is hearing from its immigrants more forcefully and frequently than ever: there was Naipaul in the 1970s, and then came Rushdie, and finally the gates were opened to a flood of others, including Hanif Kureishi, Michael Ondaatje (a Canadian of Sri Lankan descent who is better known in England than he is here), Ben Okri, and Kazuo Ishiguro. Not to mention the superb Irish writers at work today (Colm Tóibín and Roddy Doyle, with renewed attention to William Trevor) as well as the Australians, many other Canadians, and Scots, all of whom publish in their home country and England at the same time, there being still some sense of the Commonwealth at work in the book business. All of these groups have made their mark on a literary culture that manages to be snobbish and ghetto-happy at the same time.

England also supports its literary life with a slew of literary prizes, most notably the Booker Prize and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award. One gets the strong impression that there has been an explosion in the commercial and popular importance of these prizes, and that this growth has had a cohesive effect on British literary sensibilities. As an American reader who occasionally brushes against British literary life, I do not remember ever hearing much about the Booker Prize in the United States until Salman Rushdie won it for *Midnight's Children* in 1981. This was something of an historical turning point; since then, a number of observers from different venues have noted that the Booker has favored writers with Third World backgrounds and large, modernist narra-

[1] *To carry the metaphor further, there are a few American writers, some of the best, in fact—Evan Connell, Cormac McCarthy, and that Mrs. Callibash of American fiction Thomas Pynchon—who have made a vocation of the outpost and are like renegade colonels holed up in abandoned forts, quoting scripture and Shakespeare into empty skies while some dog roots in the dust outside the gates. For most other writers the act is not so heroic. It is not unusual for writers with one-year contracts to spend nine months in Iowa, nine in California, nine in Texas, with summer work at the conferences—becoming cultural migrant workers or traveling circus acts, entertaining only in the local sense.*

ve ambitions.[2] If this is true, it ight explain why there is an ac-eptance in England of new and aring work.[3] In any case, no such echanism exists in the United tates to promote one type of fiction clique or sensibility over another. ur own major prizes tend, by force polite and unimpressive commit-e thinking, to honor mostly forget-ble and minor books. All but a few merican writers and even publish-g insiders would be hard-pressed to call the Pulitzer or National Book Award winners from the last five or ten years.

One of the writers who has enefited from Britain's acceptance the eclectic and openly literary is azuo Ishiguro. Six years ago, when higuro published *The Remains of e Day*, about a painfully proper nd self-deluded English butler, he as not yet thirty-five. The novel on the Booker and not long after-ard was made, with all the usual ne fabrics, into a successful Mer-chant Ivory film. The book had a kind of perfection both of composition and emotional balance, a seamless union of vestigial Edwardian diction and tightly reined sentimentality, given all the more power by a story that touched on the central political terror of our century, Nazism, and the historical mistakes of the British aristocracy that sympathized with it. The book's success—over a million copies sold worldwide—made Ishiguro into an international literary star.

Before *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro had published two other novels, *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, both of which are set in Japan, the land of his birth (he emigrated to England at the age of six). Like *The Remains of the Day*, they garnered nearly universal critical praise, other awards (satellite tournaments for the Booker), and, especially in paperback following the success of *Remains*, substantial sales.

Ishiguro's newest novel, *The Unconsoled*, arrives a larger, more complex, and less sensible novel than his previous offerings, a radically different kind of book, and it will be interesting to see if the reception is so warm. Nearly every reader will note *The Unconsoled*'s severe dreamlike quality; but merely to call it dreamlike is insufficient to the anxiety and fascination it evokes. The word "dreamlike" is not in this case merely another way of saying plotless or elliptical or lovely or Kafkaesque; the novel is in some degree all of these. But within the first two pages you notice something else: Ishiguro has created a complex and timeless atmosphere that carries through 500 pages, explicitly emulating the irrational geography and strange narrative familiarity of the dreamworld in an uncanny and unrelenting way. He has done this not only to provide himself a certain episodic freedom—to open the book up and allow himself to experiment—but also to render a certain condition of consciousness. And then, as in all his books, he explores that condition's moral ramifications.

In departing so radically from his earlier narrative style, Ishiguro has taken a considerable risk. One of his strengths has been a narrative clarity of purpose; he had in his first three novels a very delicate but fairly obvious way of unfolding a story—what the reader sensed to be happening and where roughly the reader expected events to lead turned out to be just so, rendered with sufficient beauty and emotional force to make the writing deeply satisfying to the engaged imagination. In his new novel, Ishiguro abandons that tactic, or at least asks the reader for a considerably more sophisticated series of predictions about what might occur next and for a considerably less personal emotional connection to whatever that might turn out to be.

The story concerns a pianist named Ryder, who arrives at a strange hotel in an unnamed European city, where a few days later he will play a concert. In between the arrival, which opens the book, and the concert, which ends it, we wander with Ryder through chance encounters with people who seem to know him but whom he cannot quite remember, or eventually remembers without knowing quite how he forgot (including a woman named Sophie, who appears to be his lover, and her child, Boris, who appears to be his son, living in this foreign city where he is ostensibly a stranger). His arrival three days or so prior to his scheduled recital presumably will allow him to prepare, but in fact he never does anything to prepare; what official appointments he has (interviews, rehearsals, planning sessions, receptions) he nearly always misses in favor of coincidental and strange adventures, impromptu visits to unlikely parts of the city, some dingy and modern, some medieval or quaint, some even rural in quality, all bordering on one another. Ryder passes through these events and places as if by fiat of unconscious and highly ironic association. Although he is frequently outraged by various senseless and implacable requests, he is never really shocked or disoriented by his bizarre circumstances; like a dreamer, he accepts absolutely the arbitrary and silent logic of his dream. The following is from one of his early wanderings in the city:

The Booker Prize also has fostered some gnificant battles, and these, in the literary e of a given period, are a healthy thing. For ample, much of the recent controversy in ngland surrounding Martin Amis's newest ovel, The Information, *for which he de-anded and eventually received a very large lvance, has its roots in an underlying con-oversy about the Booker Prize: Amis was, rly in his career, granted celebrity status as writer in England in part because he was, a mild sort of way, notorious and bright d in part because he was born of a notori-us and bright English writer of an earlier neration. But the essential artistic/com-ercial authority derived from the Booker, d to a lesser degree from the Whitbread d a few other prizes, was perennially de-ed him. With* The Information, *I believe, openly pushed for that recognition, and e English literary establishment, or a few rtisans within it, chose to fight back.*

Britain does not cling to realism in its most rious novels. Martin Amis made time go ackward in Time's Arrow, *Will Self anded out cross-sexual genitalia in* Cock Bull, *and Pat Barker has re-created the orld of Ford Madox Ford in* Regenera-on *and the books that follow, while Julian arnes resurrected Flaubert in* Flaubert's arrot. *We Americans passed through a hase of not clinging to realism in our litera-re three and two decades ago, but then de-ded, as with so much else in our culture, at we missed the traditional and wanted it ack with a vengeance.*

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> I was keen not to let her get too far ahead again, but just at that moment I became conscious of footsteps coming down behind us and I could not help lingering a second to look back up the alley. Just as I did so, the person entered the pool of light cast by the lower lamp and I saw that it was someone I knew. His name was Geoffrey Saunders and he had been in my year at school in England. I had not seen him since schooldays, so was naturally struck by how much he had aged.

The unnamed city of the novel is filled with strange, anxious, highly neurotic inhabitants who constantly, though vaguely, bemoan the fall of their once-lofty little capital. Ishiguro has them talking incessantly, and in arcane, overblown terms, of one or another form of civic and spiritual salvation for the city, which we gather is in bad straits, having metaphorically caved in (we are never told how) on its own hollow core of European prosperity and culture. The recent debasement of the place is a central concern for which Ryder carries some unidentifiable responsibility; people are forever expressing the most absurd gratitude to him merely for arriving, as if this piano recital marks some inexplicable, mistily historic moment of return to glories past. These ancillary figures Ishiguro makes, for the most part, into comic characters, the mechanisms of absurd and often quite funny mishaps, failures, and interludes of total confusion. But they also have the faceless and eerie quality of the chorus in a classical tragedy, "citizens" who both predict and critique their own demise.

Each of the book's scenes is complete unto itself but without the formal characteristics of beginning and end, and has no basis in anything resembling real time, real behavior, or real manner. Often the characters, generally addressing Ryder, launch into lengthy and highly unrealistic monologues about their families, their problems, the city's history and, in the vaguest terms, its past triumphs and recent failures—all by way of filling Ryder in on whatever piece of madness is about to pile into the story like one in a series of autos in the middle of a long bumper crunch. At first glance these speeches, in which time stands still, feel odd and unnatural to contemporary fiction, but they turn out to provide the narrative release of the book, the inner seeds of actual stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. The language is often full of traditional European public rhetoric, personalized and rendered absurd, such as in this passage of regrets over the handling of a much-eulogized dead dog:

> "The fact was this. On account of [the dog]'s stiffness, on account of the foolish way I had chosen to transport him up on my shoulder, that is to say, in a virtually upright position . . . Well, the point is, sir, from any of the houses in Schildstrasse the whole upper part of his body would have been visible over the top of the fence. In fact, cruelty upon cruelty, it was just that time of the evening when most households were gathered in their back rooms for their evening meals. They would have been gazing at their gardens as they ate and would have seen our noble friend gliding past, his paws thrust in front—ah, the indignity of it. Household after household! I have become haunted by it, sir, I can see it before me, how it must have looked . . .

Ishiguro retains here his lovin eye for the arbitrary and deeply in hibiting social manners that hav been the chief failing of the charac ters in all his books—a sense of for mality that becomes a kind of willfu blindness, a tendency toward doin absolutely the wrong thing for per fectly proper reasons. The long, ram bling speeches provide a venue fo Ishiguro's comic sense, his bone-dr ironies; but they also carry anothe larger meaning. It is plain that th author is deeply concerned with fas cism, explicitly in his first three nov els and implicitly in *The Unconsole* Here, as in all his work, he creat an ingenious and unavoidable asso ciation between social conformit (especially the irrational and obse sive defense of tradition) and a re sulting oppression not only of pe

ɔnal liberty and emotional liberty ıt of political liberty as well. Ishiıro takes passivity to its ultimate ate of helplessness and destructiveess. In *The Unconsoled* there is a scism of high culture, as it were, ıat dominates the unnamed city, ıe that feels distinctly German; the tizen's names are for the most part erman and central European ames, and the impenetrable claims the best intentions in the face of very failure also have that distinctly erman air.

Reading this book, one is remind- of the Swiss novelist and playwright lax Frisch, which certainly cannot be id of Ishiguro's earlier work. There the phantasm of social domination nd betrayal of Frisch's most famous ay, *The Firebugs*, and there is the reamy lack of identity and memory, ıose shifting realities of self, of risch's novels *I'm Not Stiller*, *Homo aber*, and *Gantenbein*. Ishiguro's novopens with Ryder arriving at the ty's premier hotel, now a bit down-atıe-heels, and the language of the scene The ceiling was low and had a defite sag") established for me an echo of risch that I couldn't shake for the rest the novel, suffused as it is, page by age, with a sense not only of Euroean decline but of a decline stemming ɔm profound and unnameable moral ilure. The city is run by an enfeebled istocracy in search of idols and kings, nd it represents more than Germany, in fact. It represents all of Europe.

Throughout, Ishiguro sticks to his ery difficult task of erasing and reɔrmulating his characters' histories nd self-knowledge from scene to ɛene, even from moment to moent; this effort allows him to move uickly between anxiety and comey—in the manner, again, of Frisch, nd in the manner of Beckett and ther high modernists as well. What ıe characters know, and therefore hat we as readers can count on nowing about them, changes with- a paragraph, within a sentence. nd what the reader knows in relaon to what the characters know is ritical in the development of draıatic tension (see *King Lear* for a ultitude of examples). Readers build up certain expectations about the story and the characters' behavior based on what the author has established as the realm of the possible, a realm that, in the best books, is seamless and expansive but still fundamentally bounded. And then, of course, for his own amusement, if for no other reason, the writer plays along the edges of this projected boundary, and the quality of his dance and the color of his many flags function both to seduce and surprise his audience.

This entire economy of typical storytelling is irrelevant in *The Unconsoled*. In its stead, Ishiguro has set himself the daunting task of holding our attention, our affection, and our commitment moment by moment, through a sort of episodic hypnosis. In all but a few places he succeeds.[4] Ishiguro's earlier books were lovely, shapely, delicately emotional, and, in terms of their intelligence, quietly forceful. Many of those attributes appear within *The Unconsoled*, but on the whole it is not at all an easy book—readers will find it difficult, especially at first, to live in this world of drifting reality and constant inappropriateness. But this very difficulty, and Ishiguro's success in leading you through it, is what gives the book its heft and makes it, at last, a work of art. One accepts, early on, that the novel doesn't progress, and won't; what it does do is twist, and the ultimate effect is of an intricate, thick braid, like a ship's line, stronger than the sum of its parts, a rope wound together from strands of dreaminess, dislocation, and loss.

The Unconsoled, finally, is a kind of hypermodern *Through the Looking-Glass*, with Ryder being not the sturdy and sensible bourgeois girl, fundamentally immune to every kind of nonsense and chaos, but a twentieth-century artist, in all the distant, fractured, and untouchable senses of that phrase. Alice survives her journey; the same cannot be said with any certainty of Ryder. His condition at the end of the book is not of great consequence: he began the story in an empty and dissociative state, in a kind of drained suspension, and he will go on that way no matter what has happened, the only difference being that we have been allowed, over a discrete period, to have joined him in that condition, and we are left horrified. As the book began with Ryder's arrival, it essentially ends with his concert; built up by various personages of the city to an almost intolerable degree, this concert is doomed, it does not take long to surmise, to a rather spectacular failure. The disaster comes, I suppose, but the effect doesn't feel very catastrophic. It is a nonevent, deeply disturbing, on both a large and an intimate scale, as if the novel's accumulated unreality has now overpowered the whole world, even that last reasonable corner of Ryder's consciousness from which we hoped, at the last, some clarifying message would come regarding his condition and, by extension, our own.

Though seemingly desperate for that shred of transcendence that an artist of Ryder's stature can offer them, the citizens never allow him to play. Thus they are left unconsoled, and so are we. It is interesting to consider what unconscious message Ishiguro might be delivering here: a fantastically successful artist himself, by birth a stranger to the essential European culture that now fascinates and repulses him, producing a book as modern and difficult as the odd-sounding compositions Ryder promises to play, he may very well fear that his audience, clamoring as it has for his work, will in fact pay no attention to it when it finally appears. ■

[4] *The flaw of* The Unconsoled *is a very British flaw: its length. No matter how open-minded or eager to embrace the modern and the new, one is considerably more tolerant of plotlessness when one's right hand is not gripping five hundred and some odd pages of it still to come. But in England, it is said, book editors don't edit, and for the most part this seems likely. A kind of laziness, or lack of tautness, has become characteristic even of the best novels coming out of England today; it has been the curse of England's best writers of the last fifteen years not to be at least questioned about some of their choices and guided, if not forced, to tighten things up, trim and shape, pull the string. This is true of every one of Martin Amis's novels I've read; it is howlingly true of Winterson and Rushdie; Will Self's work is a little more willing to be spare, but his stuff still looks on the page as if it needs a good combing, like the hair of an unruly child; and even Barnes, sedate and overintellectual, well, goes on a bit.*

LEAVING THE FOLK

The journey out of a Cleveland childhood

By Phillip Richards



I am a black professor of English at a small "elite" university in upstate New York. In this tiny town the shoe-store owner, newspaper vendor, and garbagemen wave hello to me as I walk to the gray stone campus buildings where I work. My family leaves our doors unlocked—neighbors sometimes come into the empty house to return a casserole dish—and I am currently in possession of a lawn mower that I borrowed three weeks ago. I spend most of my time teaching and writing about literature. My presence here is not accidental. My parents attended Hampton Institute, a small black college in Virginia, where they studied under white New England teachers who were themselves educated in schools such as the one at which I now teach. My mother grew up idealizing the crisp abolitionist air that I have breathed for much of my professional life. My life here is, in fact, the fulfillment of her dreams.

At my university, I am frequently called upon to give moral and psychological support to the black students who attend this predominantly white school. No one has ever demanded this of me; it is implicit in my existence here. Many of the black students I encounter feel deeply alienated from the very institution that provides them with a free $25,000-a-year education; they are distrustful of whites and often cannot handle the schoolwork. In class they tend to stick together. In public their faces are impassive. Their speech to outsiders is often laconic and ironical. They have shielded themselves emotionally from an academic and social environment that they find profoundly threatening. Beneath their stony exteriors is a trauma that outsiders cannot know.

Those black students who mingle with their white classmates have probably gone to upper-middle-class suburban high schools or private schools. One immediately recognizes the exceptional black students on campus: their faces tend to be relaxed, they are likely to say hello, as is the community manner, and—I will not let this pass—they tend to be light-skinned. They look

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Illustration by Terrance Cumming

e my parents, say, might imagine a ack student at such a school to look. ey belong *at the school* rather than *in e school's black community*. The very st of them are making a break that ery black intellectual, in his own y, makes—away from the world of e folk and into the realm of ideas. nd I suspect that despite their exllent manners they are more than a tle uneasy.

Five years ago, along with a psyologist and a historian, I taught an terdisciplinary course on racism. Alough my colleagues gave informed ctures, what I remember were the oments of psychodrama and rage exbited by the black students huddled groups in our large, sunlit classom. From time to time the black udents confronted the whites with idence of the racism they found emdded in every aspect of academic e at the college. At one point I asked y the blacks remained at such a deicable place, why they did not walk t. The unofficial spokesman for the ack group, addressing me in a tone e uses with overeducated dummies, ld me that they were there for the holarship money.

My students' behavior paralyzed e for the rest of the day. I felt that I ould have had some prepared reonse, for, as I have said, part of my ademic function is to provide guidce to black students. All I have to fer by way of explanation is the nse that the impasse between me d my black students is not extraornary. It has repeated itself often in y life and in the lives of my parents, d perhaps in the lives of their parts as well. My black students are ving black America's central but rgely unacknowledged reality: divion by class. They are entering the impasse in which I came to know the world.

I was born in 1950 in Cleveland, hio, where my father came to work the steel mills and auto factories ter World War II. He and my other moved from neighborhood neighborhood there, in a pattern at led from Glenville to Mt. Pleasnt to Lee Harvard and finally to orest Hill, the once-exclusive secon of Cleveland Heights. There was nothing distinctive about this journey; it had been followed in different forms first by middle-class Jews and later by middle- and, finally, lower-class blacks. The consequences of the demographic shifts on Cleveland's East Side do not encourage sentimental attachments to old neighborhoods. I would not, for example, get out of the car now to inspect the studio apartment in Cleveland's Glenville where my parents first lived. A few years ago, however, I drove into Mt. Pleasant to show my wife and children the shingled three-bedroom house on the leafy street where I'd grown up. In front of what had once been the Reverend McKinney's sycamore-shaded lawn, I paused behind a large, white Cadillac. From the house that had once belonged to the Reverend McKinney ran two young black men. Although I saw them pass a small packet into the Cadillac's window, it took me much longer than my wife and thirteen-year-old daughter to recognize what had happened—in the broadest sense. When we returned to my family's house in Cleveland Heights, my father, now eighty years old, gave me a look when he heard that I had driven my wife and children in a Volvo station wagon down Kinsman Street to East 137th Street—then he broke out into his broad, incredulous laugh, amazed that anyone could be so stupid.

Forty years ago, around 5:00 P.M. on Saturdays, in front of the house on East 137th Street, my father would stand in the driveway and hose the stray grass down into the street. The loose cuttings streamed down the asphalt to the gutter, where they flowed into the sewer. My father stood there erect for a good half hour, moving slowly down the drive, his jaw set, his eyes placid with thought. By that time in the day he had cleaned the entire house and often had worked on whatever car we owned (we always had a large American station wagon that my father held together for six or seven years). He was then in his early forties and worked, by my count, sixty and sometimes seventy hours a week as a custodian in the Cleveland public schools. In one of those significant parental acts that no child can fathom, he kept me, his eldest son, by his side for most of Saturday, telling me tales of his early life. Before he became the rather self-satisfied black burgher that he seemed to me at nine years old, he had been an undertaker's assistant in Kentucky, a drifter, a shipmate working on the great aircraft carriers as they were being built in Newport News during World War II, and a lackluster student in auto mechanics at Hampton Institute, where he had sung spirituals and blues. When I was old enough to ask why he wandered across the country at nineteen with neither money nor kin, he replied that something had said go, and he went.

I was a slender, bookish boy who lived in my imagination; I appalled my father, much of whose experience consisted of watching disasters overtake heedless people like myself. And many of the stories he told on those Saturday mornings and afternoons were about such disasters. He remembered, for instance, the typhoid fever that had struck his hometown in Kentucky, killing most of the black children his age. When their temperatures went past 102, he said, they usually died. Working on an aircraft carrier, he had watched as two men killed a third by playfully sticking an air hose up his anus. In one of the factories where he had worked, he had seen men electrocuted. His own father had worked in the mines in Kentucky and died of stomach ulcers, howling on his bed while his wife and children listened, utterly unable to comfort him.

My father told these stories in an enormously calm manner, with no change of expression. He rarely maintained eye contact with me but instead looked off into the distance, much as my black college students do when I question them too insistently about their studies. After finishing the lawn, my father would walk me around the neighborhood and chat with the neighbors, Mr. Beasely and Mr. Gregory. At first the men would solicitously ask me questions about school and current events, but inevitably the talk settled into the same placid tones of voice, the same faraway looks—the signs of shared understanding that this world was full of suffering, expected and unexpected. The great unending trauma demanded endurance—the set lips and impassive

grace with which [illegible] learn to confront the world. (It has taken me years of working with black students to understand that it is this same stern faculty of endurance I inevitably encounter in their silences and quizzical glances. They have the nihilistic attitudes of the folk, but secondhand, by way of the rappers on MTV and the buffoons on black situation comedies. Nevertheless, their postures seem to carry authentic weight.)

My mother would often angrily interrupt my father's storytelling in the driveway in order to redirect him to his work. He loved to talk, and my mother saw his talk as a kind of intolerable irrationality, a luxury that kept the family from further achievement. My parents had acquired what little they owned only through her frugal budgeting, her fierce restraints upon my father's spending habits, and the utter suppression of any kind of pleasure that cost money. His stoic worldview accompanied a present-mindedness that allowed him to draw pleasure from the very world that confined him. In defiance of my mother, for example, he would buy handfuls of fruit candy when we went downtown to shop.

Lacking my father's self-possession, my mother was never satisfied with our circumstances. She was forever on the move; even in repose she was not still. Had my father not been so unshakably rooted, he might have been disturbed, but he looked on her with a certain amusement. Seated on the gray sofa, he watched her the way one might observe a newly caged cockatoo. Her friends were the left-wing teachers at Park Synagogue, the only white nursery school in Cleveland willing to hire a young black woman in the late 1940s. She had pounded the streets of the East and West Sides past mobs of pushing, poking, babushkaed, newly arrived immigrants. She now had the job of teacher and was renowned in Cleveland's cultured Jewish society for her skills with her students, children of wealthy Jewish families. She had seen the boom of prosperity that gilded the postwar lives of her students and their parents (the synagogue designed in the international style by Eric Mendelsohn, its Chagall-like air of old-world modernism amid what was still a woodsy Cleveland Heights), and she grimly discerned the world of black middle-class Cleveland from the vantage point of the flowering possibilities of Shaker Heights and Beachwood. It is easy now to stereotype the vulgarity of suburban life in the Fifties, but that way of life represented an essentially green American spirit of promise. My mother grasped a springtime sense of the world's fluidity, which in that moment seemed to be symbolized by the movement of successive groups through the Canaan of Cleveland's East Side, and it was there that she wanted to move from East 137th Street.

I now live in what I have come to recognize as a distant offshoot of my mother's world. The age of leftist black and white cooperation in which she lived is now gone. Most of my students come from upper-class families in New York City and its surrounding suburbs in Connecticut and New Jersey, and although I used to know all of the cultural signs of the left, I am now bewildered by the improbable collage of styles and shapes that pass through my classroom. When I read my students' papers, it occurs to me that I am teaching the children of the generation of postwar toddlers my mother taught. My closest friend in prep school once showed me a Park Synagogue nursery school report written by my mother and still kept by his family. It was a two-page note closely written in a determined and meticulous hand. Its focus was a lengthy analysis of the way in which my friend played with his class's pet animals. I try, and fail, to imagine my mother at age thirty-one or thirty-two, observing the habits of wealthy Jewish children with hamsters. Her efforts, I suppose, are little different from my own as I watch my wealthy white charges' attempts at comprehending Jonathan Edwards, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Toni Morrison. The deep irony of black life, which my mother had noticed already in the Fifties, was that the greatest intellectual fulfillment for blacks is to be found in atypical places, in unexpected connections and unimagined conditions. But although my students have inherited the same deep promise of American life that drove my mother to her remarkable accomplishments as an educator and parent, many do not recognize me as a brother. In their eyes I am the beneficiary of obscene privileges that will be denied them. They regard me skeptically at the beginning of each semester, and over the course of the term cautiously watch one another across the newest ethnic fault line in American life.

So unlike were my father and mother that one had to remind oneself that they were both black. Only during the rituals of Saturday morning breakfast did one come to understand the complicated set of anxieties, hopes, and satisfactions that had brought them together. At the breakfast table they told and retold the story of their unexpected union, and there, for brief moments, I realized that my parents had been young once: my mother a light-skinned, long-haired girl, madly in love with my father at Hampton, giving up a fellowship to the Bank Street School in New York City for the fall of 1947; my father a factory worker and erstwhile mechanic, a failed sociology and physical education student at all-black Kentucky State. On the face of it, they were an unpromising match: she was nineteen, with her future before her; he a good twenty-nine, with bad prospects. At Hampton, they rowed together in boats, fished for eels, and plotted a life in which their differences made no difference at all.

The black middle class is now in the process of constructing a romance around the history of its black colleges, but Hampton Institute was a tough, bitter place for my parents, even though both had come from difficult backgrounds. Whenever I complained about racial discrimination, my father would wryly observe that it was particularly bad among black people. My mother, he knew, had been hurt in ways that only one who held black middle-class aspirations could be. His father, himself a mulatto child of a slave-master father, had, through hard work, thrift, and the leeway given racially mixed people in her part of Virginia, built a large successful farm which he lost in a horrifying apocalyptic fire when my mother was seven. Raised by her older and well-off married cousins, she bore, as an orphan, the brunt of the family's legacy of decline. To attend Hampton as a disadvantaged student despite what my

ousins called her "blow hair" (hair ng and straight enough to blow in a n) must have been an enormous trau- a. A poor grind, she was looked down on despite her light skin (something hat took some doing in the Hamp- n of the Forties). Even though she as an excellent student, she gave up scholarship to Howard, fearing the lubs that the children of black doc- rs, lawyers, and undertakers reserved r their fellow blacks. At Hampton e concentrated on her studies while orking nearly forty hours a week. My ther, misplaced in the trade school, as working almost equally long hours, xploited by teachers who on more an a few occasions called him out bed to repair defunct wartime cars. nder autocratic professors, amid obbish classmates, my parents could ever escape their backgrounds in dirt- or rural Virginia and Kentucky. In- eed, when I encountered the black cademic world, their pasts would adow me.

However much my parents respect- the New England culture that the hite missionary professors had ought to Hampton from Massachu- tts, New York, and Connecticut, ey despised its appropriation by an cademic black middle class eager for glory and a social standing that the ansplanted New Englanders went out their way to disdain. My parents w these black academics and their hi Beta Kappa children attending artmouth and Columbia as the very nbodiment of ruthless black status- eking arrogance. My father's first ean at Kentucky State, who was ack, had dismissed him from school, lmonishing him to go home and find job cleaning for the white people. y father was fond of imitating a ung black martinet who had just re- ived his Ph.D. from Indiana Uni- rsity. Standing in overalls in the rage, my father would mock the ack professor (as he was called), hold- g his finger like a candle. "I am Dr. ark," he said in a falsetto voice, "and will fail you."

My home was filled with pious re- ect for what black students at my llege now disparagingly call white Western culture, a respect whose erfunctory signs were ragged paper- ack editions of Freud's writings and



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by G. J. Meyer

Nearing fifty years of age, G. J. Meyer was "let go" from his position as vice president of public relations at McDonnell Douglas. Eventually he found a new job, but within a few years this, too, was eliminated, and Meyer found himself thrown onto the job market once again.

This book interweaves Meyer's "war stories" of the chaotic labor market—the vague "searches" conducted by corporations, shabby treatment at the hands of headhunters, the trials of his fellow "living dead" in outplacement—with remembrances of his past as a blue-collar "wonder boy."

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Shakespeare's tragedies. Oblivious to my parents' real relationship toward the cultural world into which they pushed me, I dutifully read the books they gave me, practiced for the piano lessons they arranged at the Cleveland Institute of Music, studied French at Western Reserve's summer school, and earnestly observed what I saw at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Yet even the haphazard cultivation available to a black boy on Cleveland's 137th Street inevitably led me to discover that my parents' respect for culture had little to do with their actual lives. Like everything else they possessed, they held their enthusiasms in trust for their children's future. I can qualify this generalization only by noting their appreciation of the great African American singers they had heard as college students at Hampton in the Forties. The names of Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, and Marian Anderson were mentioned with nothing less than religious awe. And some of the fiercer arguments at the Sunday dinner table concerned the tempos with which spirituals had been sung that morning at Antioch Baptist Church, a question ultimately turning on a deeper dilemma; namely, whether the great slave hymns were, as my parents felt, the self-pitying moans they had become among the urban black lumpen of the North or were, in fact, what W.E.B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson claimed they were: the American Negro's most dignified and profound contribution to the culture of the West.

This passion perhaps explains my contact with a spinsterish, wire-haired, eccentric black woman in her late sixties named Mrs. Apple, a teacher discovered by my parents at the Cleveland Institute of Music. One afternoon, on the pretense of being frustrated by my inept performance of a Chopin prelude, she spent over an hour playing Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms for me, discoursing all the while on Romanticism as I listened, spellbound. It had never occurred to me before that this music, along with the foreign-language texts on her desk, was part of a world of thought, time, and place. I wondered with whom she discussed her love and knowledge of music and literature, this apparently secret treasure that she had clearly hoarded for herself. In her ramblings I had the first premonitions of the life abroad not only in music but in the books and names in the dull gray library at 140th Street and Kinsman.

At the end of those Saturday morning breakfasts, my parents basked in the reminiscence of their intention to come to Cleveland because it was a place where they could educate their children in good schools and museums and live in the relatively inexpensive large homes of Wade Park, Glenville and Mt. Pleasant. These neighborhoods eventually turned into ghettos, but even now their vast fronts convey the promise Cleveland offered its postwar immigrants from Europe and the South. If my father possessed these dreams, he had taken them from my mother, even as she had appropriated his placid assurance that this middle-class utopia could, in fact, be reached. The Cleveland they arrived in looked more like what one expected of Warsaw or Prague than a Midwestern American city on Lake Erie. As a young boy I noticed that more people on the bus read Polish, Hungarian, or German newspapers than the lackluster morning *Plain Dealer* or the sensationalist *Cleveland Press*. In this new world, my parents had created an unlikely romance. Once, deep into a Saturday afternoon, my father showed me two packets of letters wrapped in pink ribbon, their correspondence when my father came to Cleveland to find work in the factories while my mother stayed in Hampton after their marriage. It was hard to imagine that my parents, who had spent many of their nights arguing over the bills, had once been enthralled with their new fortunes. But it is clear from the letters that Cleveland would be an escape from the endless color snobbery of Hampton Institute, from my maternal relatives (who thought the marriage such an obvious disaster for this bright young girl with a scholarship), and (this point being even farther from the surface) from the restrictions of the color line that imprisoned them outside the middle-class black world. Their deepest, most pleasurable memories had a pastoral simplicity: riding the pedal boats in the

ade Park lagoon, my mother read-
alone in the library on 106th Street,
d the long walks they took through
en green Glenville, dreaming of the
urgeois life and happiness that they
uld one day possess.

This happiness rapidly ran afoul of
e prejudices held by the blacks my
ents came to know in Cleveland.
though my mother's skin color, her
ucation, and her social aspirations
ght have qualified her for an upper-
ss black church such as the Euclid
venue Congregational Church, my
her's job as a janitor suited him
ly for the storefront churches along
dar Avenue. They compromised
d attended Antioch Baptist Church,
ere they were roundly snubbed by
e elite of doctors and professionals
d assigned to the lower class of maids
d laborers.

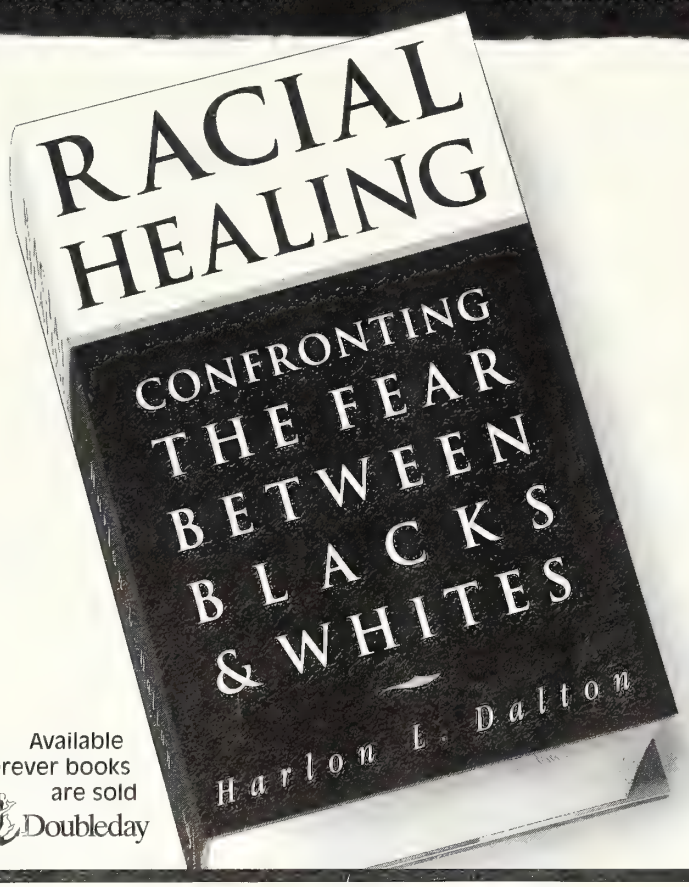
Their minister, the Reverend Mc-
nney, belonged to a light-skinned
ssissippi family. The son of a share-
pper, he had nevertheless attended
orehouse College. In the sanctuary
the pulpit, he flaunted his class priv-
ge by reprimanding members of the
ngregation who responded aloud to
n during his sermons. In a nasty bit
class consciousness, he made fun of
e large, expensive leather purses car-
d by a number of elderly black wom-
. These women were maids, and for
em, as for many lower-class people
Antioch, church attendance af-
ded a show of dignity denied them
their employers' homes in Shaker
eights and Beachwood. My mother
s the last person to romanticize low-
class blacks, but even she was struck
the utter cruelty of McKinney's fre-
ent jibes.

All the same, church was the ideo-
gical pivot of our lives. The sermon
s the first literary form that carried
e structure of ideas for me; the sacra-
nts, my first encounter with mys-
y in the form of metaphor. The
urch's articulation of mystery allowed
e to feel for the first time what I could
t adequately explain to myself. To go
a black Baptist church in Cleveland
the late Fifties and early Sixties was
encounter the deepest hopes and as-
rations of black people at a propi-
us time in history. My parents at-
nded morning and early afternoon
rvices, teaching Sunday school in be-

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Jerusalem (2)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that it had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem has now again become of interest, in connection with the ongoing peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and with the effort, supported by 93 senators, to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem—reunited and indivisible. Before the Six-Day War in 1967 Jerusalem was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part of the city. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out, all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. The various Christian denominations, with important churches and sacred places in Jerusalem, were hampered in their activities and operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

With the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces after Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War and with the reunification of the city, Jerusalem truly became free and open. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down and the city reunited, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements have been torn down in Jerusalem.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's Capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem, not even the Arabs themselves question that the western part of the city is Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York or Chicago, rather than in Washington, D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv, rather than in Jerusalem. It is a bizarre situation; because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The U. S. maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the city that the particular government designates as its capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

> "The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict.To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

Congress in favor of moving Embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their election, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore, assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress—both Republicans and Democrats—have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. It is to be expected therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy will indeed be located in Jerusalem—the capital of Israel, one of our closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities". While there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Hussein of Jordan would not jeopardize the lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Even the PLO would soon return to the negotiating table. The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal Yassir Arafat once and for all that he will not get U.S. and world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment—in any part of it—as the capital of a new Arab state.

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tween. The songs of the young adult choir were often spirituals. There was a junior church for older children and young adolescents. At Communion Christians were served a sweet undiluted portion of Welch's grape juice; I can still feel its stickiness on my tongue. Music was provided by a choir, to which I belonged. There, for the first time, I heard "We Shall Overcome," sung by three girls who crossed their arms and joined hands. Theologically, we were exposed to the Reverend McKinney's interests, which I now understand were those of a typical nineteenth-century evangelical. I recall little emphasis on hellfire, but I came to know in a powerful way that life would end. What would death look like? Perhaps the bright glimpse of green that I caught under water during my baptism by full immersion, in the church's glass-walled font.

The eschatological slant of the service persisted into our Sunday dinner. Frequently, Mrs. Watkins, a tall, elderly black woman, was invited from church to eat with my grandmother, a small, wizened woman nearly eighty years old. Mrs. Watkins, I now realize, was a common black churchgoing type, relatively rare in our congregation. Sitting on the gray sofa above the thinning, scrupulously vacuumed carpet she held forth. She would spend long hours discussing the apocalypse with my grandmother, who knew extraordinarily lengthy passages of the Bible by heart. Mrs. Watkins, as such people will, mistook my close attention for a certain kind of religious potential and began indoctrinating me with her visions of the end. And on one Sunday afternoon when I was about eleven years old, I ran from room to room convinced that I heard God calling my name.

My father, however, was not interested in conversation about the apocalypse. His close acquaintance with disaster had made him unmoved by talk that touched bottom. My parents had friends who had recently come up from the South and thus were familiar with bankruptcy, garnishees, wages, and failed credit. Not only would the world end, as Mrs. Watkins claimed it would; a world *was* ending, the coming of some final day being in

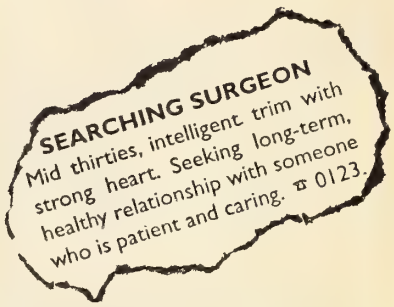
lence all around us. My parents
ked deep in the city of Cleveland,
re signs of an approaching end, at
as they conceived of it in their
incial Southern way, were hard
to see. And Sunday dinner—with
ied chicken, iced tea, and lemon
ingue pie—was a time for stock-
ng. Although the inner-city
ols—huge, dank, drab prison-like
dings where my father worked—
ld take on apocalyptic terrors in
Sixties, a dismal foreshadowing
already visible in the Fifties. In
mornings after church, I accom-
ied my father to check a school
ding and watched him repair the
dows broken by stones that lay on
classroom floors. Even more omi-
s were the growing thefts of type-
ers and business machines that in-
singly required my father to rise
bed at three in the morning after
school alarms had been tripped
the police had been called. The
es were nothing compared with
outright violence of the world of
street, a world utterly removed
my view but available for in-
tion in the lurid tales of black-on-
k murder and rape reported in the
veland Press and the local black
spaper, *The Call and Post*.

s the Sixties passed, my parents
ountered increasing signs of social
apse, and by the time of the riots in
summer of 1966, no one could ac-
my father, who by then had been
stodian for nearly fifteen years, of
g naive about black urban life.
r one of his schools was burglarized
Hough, Glenville, or Collinwood,
would drive there and wait in his car
l the police gave him the all clear
pproach a huge dark building that
themselves were only too happy
eave. But even the routine de-
ction of the windows that he fixed
Sunday, the maliciously stopped-up
ets, and the casually strewn excre-
t did not prepare him for what he
an to see in the late Sixties and
Seventies. The stories he brought
e about his workday were gradually
ked less by outrage than by in-
lulity as he described how, day af-
day, eighteen- , nineteen- , and
nty-year-olds (the Cleveland
ol system being what it was) rou-
ly kicked in doors and ripped ther-
mostats from walls. He was similarly amazed by the young pregnant women who were violent in the face of perceived and imagined insults, not only from boys and men but from other girls like themselves. As time progressed, both groups were increasingly ignored by teachers and principals, and especially by custodians, who had no wish to be shot by people for whom they had no responsibility. By the Seventies, the daily schedule of violence was taking place amid the aura of marijuana, floating from the bathrooms to the halls and, finally, like the yellow fog in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," everywhere.

My father's perspective was also informed by his commerce with the black working man. In his schools he supervised crews of twenty and thirty laborers, cleaning women, and various repairmen. The people drawn from the lower-class black community traditionally brought to their jobs the trickersterism and cynicism bemoaned by conservative social scientists and social pathologists and now celebrated by major black critics in the Modern Language Association as the spiritual heart of African American culture. Cleaning large schools with such people required a sharp tongue, a stern hand, and calculated shows of force designed to impress people who had been deconstructing white patriarchal rhetoric for some time. Yet even my father was amazed as their habitual resistance to work began to take on new forms. His men had no interest in the traditional route from laborer to fireman to custodian (a route taken by my father under the supervision of an older generation of Polish custodians deeply suspicious of his ability to learn the intricacies of shoveling coal) and were, increasingly, individuals best represented by a young man who each day dressed in a new bizarre wardrobe—one day a suit, the next day African dress.

The same tale was told from another point of view by my mother, now an administrator in the Cleveland Head Start office. She had dealt first as a teacher and then as a supervisor with the children of the violent young men and touchy girls now carefully avoided by my father in the

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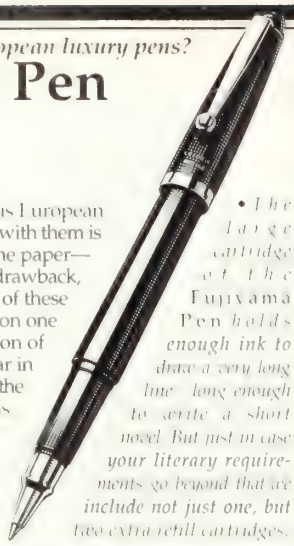
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schools. Predictably, the young pa
ents' rage continued at home—th
is, in the unlikely instance that bo
were home. By the early Seventie
this rage had begun to take on surre
manifestations that made my mothe
already hardened by years of ghet
work, wince. Cigarette burns, seve
welts, and broken limbs, freely and c
sually admitted by the three-year-o
victims to be the work of "daddy," nc
appeared regularly. A successful ga
dening project that my mother h
started some years earlier wither
away along with the plausibility of th
bourgeois values of thrift, autonom
and self-respect that had sustained

Long an advocate of continuing e
ucation, my mother arranged with
local community college to pla
teacher-educators in an associate d
gree program for early childhood ed
cation. By the end of the first ter
these students would be receivi
mostly Ds from young white radic
and liberal professors who were co
stantly on the phone with my moth
asking whether they might give the
students a grade below C. By the ne
semester, now perfectly aware of th
status in the university, these studer
cruised through the spring with D a
erages. Afterward, they inevitab
dropped out of Cuyahoga Commu
ty College, Head Start, and public l
itself, only to be seen briefly by
mother in silk dresses, stepping out
new Elektra 225s on their way
marathon card games played in gh
to apartments before huge new So
color TVs. The emergence of this n
leisure class was a continuing myst
to my mother—she, after all, had g
en up a graduate fellowship to the Ba
Street School to work full time a
raise a family. More puzzled than
gered—why would these people, w
clearly were given *everything*, q
school?—she began to ponder
emerging white liberal explanation
this phenomenon: that work, soc
mobility, respectability—indeed t
entire gestalt of the American mid
class—meant nothing to these p
ple. But this was an explanation th
she would never accept. She reject
it over and over again in increasin
fierce arguments with privileged libe
suburbanites whom she began to s
pect of a cynicism deeper than a

ng out on the already nihilistic
eets.
This world continued to come apart.
ung pregnant students would bring
ir smallest children to school; their
ners would bring guns. When I was
hild it was hard for me to make out
exact dimensions of this world, but
y were revealed by the few inner-city
ldren in my Sunday school class; al-
dy they were brazen, their mouths
, their faces impassive, and their
nds scarred with a cynicism that de-
ed the way in which they engaged
. Shortly after a space launch, my
nday school teacher, Dr. Toney, an
hodontist who taught at the West-
Reserve School of Dentistry, asked
e of my classmates what he thought
the American space program. The
, who was no more than ten, replied
ckly and unequivocally that there
s already more than enough trouble
earth for white people to attend to.

I remember Dr. Toney's flinch.

n time, my parents escaped the
ning terrors of urban wrath, and, in
ypically middle-class black journey,
ey progressed from a one-room
rtment in Wade Park to a duplex in
e-lined Glenville to their first sin-
home on 137th Street in Mt. Pleas-
to a slightly larger house on 173rd
Intermere in Lee Harvard to, fi-
ly, the woodsy, once-enclosed gar-
s of Forest Hills, where, three years
er, as an elderly couple fearing rob-
y and assault, they decided not to
en the door of their $90,000 house
Halloween.
The vision of the city left behind
dowed us and received consider-
e reflection at the Sunday dinner
le. In the midst of their accounts of
trials of black life as it was lived in
eveland from 1947 through the Six-
s, my parents brought up the same
arrel with almost ritualistic fre-
ency. The prosperous North Car-
na farm my mother grew up on had
en surrounded by dirt-poor share-
ppers who had remained on the
d of their antebellum masters. The
recroppers had never moved, and
ey exerted only minimal energy in
ending to their own needs. Late in
winter, when their thin stores of
ned vegetables disappeared, these

people—perhaps the wife and a young child—would come to my grandparents' door and ask for a "mess of beans." My grandmother readily acceded to these requests, only to rage at the sharecroppers' indolence long after their emissaries had gone. At the dinner table, my mother continued her mother's rage, now directing it at the urban poor who kept my parents awake at nights, busy on Sundays, and enervated every day of the week. My father had a different line of reasoning. He argued quietly and firmly that these people were not to be condemned for what they did, that their seeming indolence made a kind of sense, although he did not say what this was. His view only enraged my mother further; she argued that *this* was what was wrong with the race in general: "no gumption." Her father, denied any money by his white father, had as a young man hopped a freight train in North Carolina and landed in New York, where he bellhopped until he made enough money for a down payment on a plot of land between Roanoke Rapids and Weldon, where Route 95 now runs.

Here my mother would pause. Her father had died of pneumonia after the great house, the embodiment of all his dreams for his family and himself, burned down. She and her mother had been plunged into a life of dependence and poverty, albeit genteel for a black family during the Depression. But without gumption, she insisted, the race would accomplish nothing. Her exchanges with my father would continue through the last piece of lemon pie, until my father picked up the Sunday paper and went upstairs, silently, to the bathroom. In the kitchen, my mother would fume.

My father's view now haunts me wherever I go in this ambition-ridden life. I suspect that he and the sharecroppers of my mother's childhood were well acquainted with the void into which their fragile livelihoods might collapse. What did he mean when he said that the sharecroppers were perfectly *right* to sit there in all of their begging indolence? Moreover—and this was the heart of the matter—what peace could they have made with themselves after having encountered my grandmother's icy contempt? What did it mean that their way of life was

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SOLUTION TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLE

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A	L	T	A	R	R	O	I	L	A	I	R
N	R	E	C	E	D	E	D	L	I	E	U
N	A	T	T	I	L	Y	E	I	T	S	S
E	L	A	M	B	I	N	G	C	E	E	S
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G	I	L	D	E	R	U	E	T	O	E	D
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W	H	E	T	H	E	R	T	H	E	R	E
E	B	E	A	T	D	O	E	Y	N	U	N
R	A	P	P	E	D	W	R	M	I	S	T
S	A	S	H	A	Y	S	S	N	E	E	S

NOTES FOR "NO ENTRY"
All of the entries are homonyms of the clue answers.
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: 1. mete-(po)or; 6. c(it)e-(nt); 11. Alte-R.; 12. ro(w)-yal(e); 13. he-l-R.; 14. re-seeded (hidden); 15. loo(k); 16. Natalie*; 19. (s)lamming; 22. s(e[ggheadl])ize; 23. reign*; 24. bridal*; 26. guilder*; 27. homophone, towed/toad; 30. strait*; 33. weather*; 35. t-heir; 37. be-et; 39. do-ugh; 40. n.-one; 42. homophone, rapt/wrapped; 43. Miss Ed; 44. sachets*; 45. s(nee)ze. DOWN: 1. man-or; 2.(h)eight/(w)eight; 3. tacked; 4. e(l)re; 5. row (hidden); 6. sigh(t)ed; 7. elicit (hidden); 8. (segre)gated; 9. sh(G.I.)h (rev.); 10. trust, two mngs.; 14. (c)rawly; 17. tales*; 18. lyre, pun; 20. bu(Y)s; 21. G-rater; 24. burros, "U" pronounced differently; 25. L.A.-l-(inne)r; 28. Yo!-u(r.)s; 29. staff (two mngs.); 31. Je(w)-Annie; 32. tense*; 34. Eddie, hidden; 36. hi-m.; 37. ha-B. (rev.); 38. tee (two mngs.); 41. y(ou)-E.W.S.

SOLUTION TO SEPTEMBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 153). ANNE LYTTE: IT MORNING EVER COMES. Circus posters and Seven-Up signs. Well, Georgia's plumb full of those . . . one time this girl I worked with told me she thought it was real snotty of me to say a thing like that. That's what our trouble was . . . the trash thought we were snotty and the snotty thought we were trash.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 154, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the October issue. Winners of the July Double Acrostic (No. 152) are Barbara Willcockson, Whittier, California; William Alfeld, Carrollton, Illinois; and John Power, Longview, Massachusetts.

justified? My father seemed to be deeply committed to the family's hier mobility as my mother, yet in his st ic acceptance of a final emptiness found an ironic counterpoise to th hustle and bustle of h middle-class zeal.

The deepest lesson of my life contained in the impasse between m parents on those Sunday evening African American culture may h grounded not in one impulse but two: the world of intellectual and s cial accomplishment embodied by m mother; and the world of the folk, th world of my father, a world defined b its endurance of the harsh realities deprivation, pathology, and racism.

This latter world—the world of th set jaw of my father—is now chilling inhabited by my black students. Born the Seventies, they are perhaps the fi generation of African Americans confront the deep terrors of urban bla existence with little more to sustai them than the nihilistic ironies of th ghetto. The profound destructivene and rootlessness that seeped into mi dle-class black life during the Fifti and early Sixties is now their cultu style, its fragmentation and alienati commodified and legitimated by co porate interests. This commercializ world of the folk provides the explan tions with which many young bla people confront the experience of o pression. And, to an unprecedented e tent, it is the context in which black i tellectual life is now formed.

The life of intellectual aspiratio however, requires an aloofness fr the world of the folk. This is the d tance my students are trying to ca brate, to articulate for themselv This is why they consider me suller across the space of my classroom endure stony conversations with r during walks across campus. No bla of aspiration—especially today—c abandon the tragic vision of the fo especially as they pass through th valley of destruction in today's urb holocaust. Yet I hope that the v best of my black students will, li the best of African American int lectuals, find a self and a conscio ness that exists—however fleetin ly—above this nation's cauldron racial despair.

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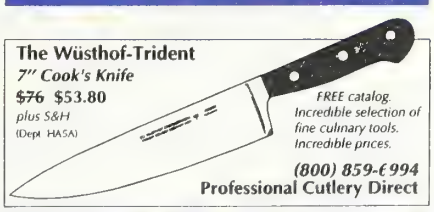
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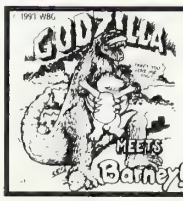
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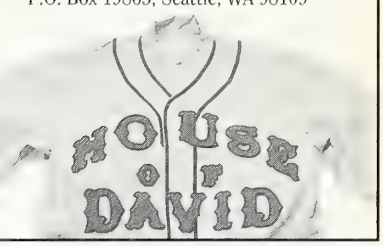


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LETTERS

Continued from page 4

Not Heard," July], Lewis Lapham insightfully outlined similarities between the deeds of former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and those of accused bomber Timothy McVeigh, but what about their greatest difference? McNamara now admits that it was wrong to have authorized the bombing of North Vietnam. McVeigh, on the other hand, admits nothing and, more importantly, has been convicted of nothing thus far. Some might consider an acknowledgment of this fact mere semantics, but I'm sure semantics mean quite a bit to the man who has become the poster child for all the evil lurking in America's Heartland. When Lapham accuses McVeigh of "attacking the fundamental premise of American democracy," he should consider how such premature assumptions of guilt attack the fundamental premise of the American judicial system.

Brendan Wolfe
Iowa City

If, as Lewis Lapham states in "Seen but Not Heard," the Oklahoma City bomber was able to "blow a Toyota 130 miles into the sky," then the bomber was able to attack not only "the fundamental premise of American democracy" but also several fundamental premises of physics.

Ken Fishkin
Redwood City, Calif.

At first I was extremely irritated to find that there was no clue listed for 37 DOWN in the July puzzle. But soon my irritation gave way to amusement at the seeming coincidence of the puzzle's ultimate solution: "sin of omission." Finally, after reading Lewis Lapham's "Seen but Not Heard," my amusement was overwhelmed by sadness as I realized that this month's puzzle symbolized American society: both contain problems that need to be solved, and those who take up the call to solve either will find something missing. Worse, they will inevitably come to realize that they haven't got a clue as to what that something is.

Steven Ballway
Gardner, Mass.

Monsieur Science

I was surprised to read, in Jac Hitt's report of the litigational nigh mare surrounding the Stringfello Acid Pits ["Toxic Dreams," July that one defendant's attorney had a gued that a citizen's exposure t chromium in Glen Avon was compa rable to the amount of chromiu found in a vitamin supplement pil The chromium in Glen Avon's pi and chromium in vitamin pills ar two different metals. The first one hexavalent; that is, it can share si electron pairs with other atoms. Th second one is only trivalent. This is huge difference. Whereas the firs type is highly toxic, the second is vi tually nontoxic. One simply canno compare exposure to these two ver different types of chromium.

I hope that this particular cas was not decided on the basis of suc a flawed argument.

Bonjour amical de Paris!

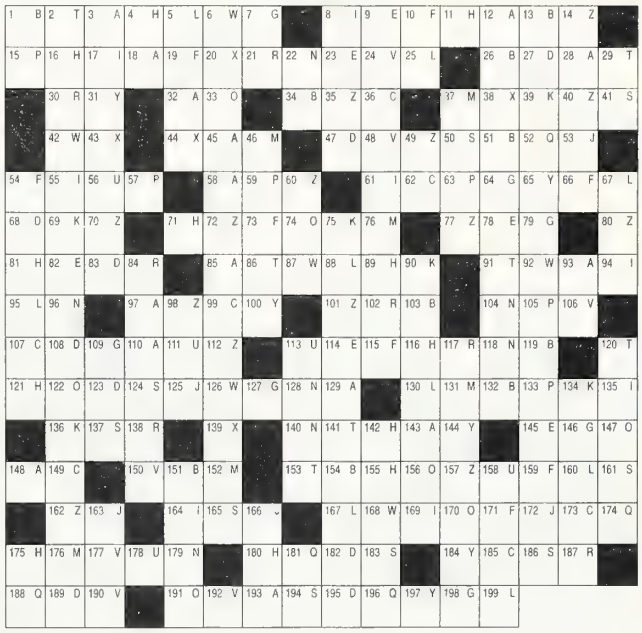
Thierry Souccar
Ris-Orangis, France

Too Much Mustard

As the former owner of a hot do stand (Hot Diggity Dogs, Inc.), I be lieve that the $900,600 price tag for three-year permit to sell hot dogs i front of New York's Metropolita Museum [Index, July] is a recipe for fi nancial disaster. Using a forecastin model that I developed for my ow business, but with updated price, cos and hot-dog-to-soda-and-knish ratio for the Met, I have determined tha you'd have to sell 230,387 hot dog just to break even on the cost of th license alone. That works out to 39. hot dogs per hot-dog-cart hour— every day, nine hours a day, rain o shine—and you're still not turning profit. My all-time dog-slingin record was 54 per hot-dog-cart hou and I can't even imagine keeping u that kind of pace year round.

Todd Wiener (yes, this is my real name)
New York City

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 154



By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 86.

CLUES WORDS

A. Thirteenth U.S. president (full name; 1800–1874)
18 97 12 148 3 93 110
85 32 143 45 193 58
28 129

B. Lure, magnetic charm
1 26 103 119 13 132 34 51
151 154

C. Direct attention toward (2 wds.)
173 149 107 36 62 99 185

D. Immunize, indoctrinate
108 189 83 123 27 68 195 182
47

E. Commence! Proceed! (2 wds.)
9 114 145 23 82 78

F. Golden horse with a white mane and tail
10 159 73 19 171 54 66 115

G. Brain, highbrow
198 64 7 146 79 127 109

H. 17,342-ft. volcano SE of Mexico City
142 4 16 121 155 71 180 175
11 81 116 89

I. Trifling, worthless
169 164 61 8 135 94 55 17

J. Signe ____: Swedish actress (*The Seventh Cross, Picture Mommy Dead*, etc.)
53 125 166 163 172

K. Figure identifying or representing something
90 134 136 69 75 39

L. Diplomatic missions
95 167 130 67 25 199 5 88
160

M. Dozed, became inattentive
37 176 76 152 131 46

N. Cheer
22 128 104 179 96 118 140

O. Concise, terse, pithy
74 170 122 156 33 147 191

P. Demented
63 105 57 133 59 15

Q. Bridges
196 174 188 181 52

R. Haunt; pad
117 102 84 138 21 30 187

S. Type of small Tibetan watchdog (2 wds.)
50 124 186 161 165 137 194 41
183

T. Of the surrounding area
141 2 120 86 153 29 91

U. Constitutional monarchy between India and Tibet
56 178 158 113 111

V. Unexpected, very welcome thing or event
150 192 190 177 24 48 106

W. "Woe is me! For I am ____; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5)
92 126 87 42 6 168

X. Detached, distant
38 20 44 139 43

Y. Idle talk or rumor
184 100 197 144 65 31

Z. U.S. politician, educator, author (1916– ; *Limits of Power, Year of the People*; full name)
112 162 49 60 98 40 157 80
101 72 14 77 35 70

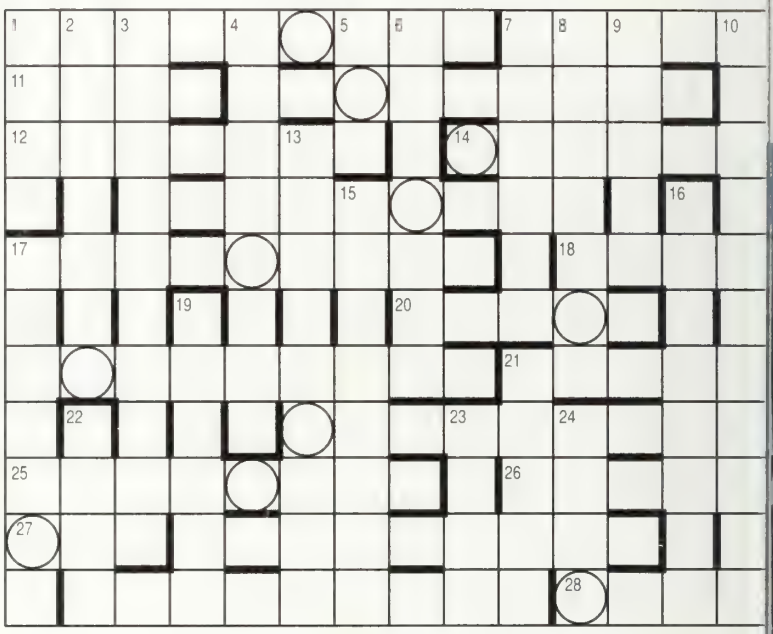
PUZZLE

Photo Finish

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli

This month's instructions: Buried in this month's diagram is the photo finish of a horse race, the finish line being the right-hand margin. The names of the eight horses running, all nine letters long, are clued separately and are to be entered in the unclued Across spaces. Solvers will enjoy noting the WIN, PLACE, and SHOW horses, and, by rearranging the circled letters, will be able to reveal what the winner won. Clue answers include two proper names.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 86.



WINNER'S PRIZE: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

HORSES

a. Narcissus shoots come again
b. For example, the "Age of Aquarius Rug?"
c. Worker ultra-confused around a star of *Arachnophobia*
d. Stunted performer died—was time for a comeback?
e. You can't start a really brilliant idea with precipitation
f. Top spin—one job for a musician
g. Arguer, painfully sick inside, and irregular
h. Kind of wood settle without a front is something that can get you into hot water

ACROSS

7. A bit of socializing before buffet—it's the mark of a loafer (5)
11. Touring Siam, sees sights (4)
12. Gyrated wildly—and it has an unhappy ending (7)
14. Teamster president (6)
18. Swinger in the sports world, he almost shows big loss in the stock market (4)
20. Playing part of Shanghai sleuth, I break up rows (5)
21. If one sounds willing, as in olden times, it's play (5)
25. Coward play with no plot or . . . (8)
26. . . . theatrical situation, a near-hit (5)
27. Rock producer of Heavy Metal gets money from Scandinavia (3)
28. I refuse two directions in front of a plane (4)

DOWN

1. Famous actor gets up and squeals (4)
2. What you pay to go for small microwaved portions of food on a plastic tray? (7)
3. Big animal shot with little energy possible (10)
4. Prominent church figures quite inclined to get less detailed! (8)
5. Kid from country music doesn't use Opry's piano (3)
6. Red coming from a root (7)
7. Grows old and urinates (6)
8. Dog with the right qualifications can be fixed (7)
9. Coupling of beautiful transvestites—far out (5)
10. Hoop skirting for fraction of a penny beer (11)
13. A shapely form on the beach would, I hear, following generally where you're going (9)
15. Here you'll find the old manse has lounge out front (4,4)
16. Scaffoldings for productions of plays (8)
17. Dangerous situation for a wild potshot (3,4)
19. Athlete having unlucky streak (6)
21. Decline to admit Latin scourge (5)
22. A lot of logs in line (4)
23. Princess is curious (see below) (4)
24. What I did when I got to this country? (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Photo Finish," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by October 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Hard Act to Follow," are Patricia Bender, Somerset, New Jersey; Dr. Stephen J. Farber, Toledo, Ohio; and Michelle Ippolito, Gardnerville, Nevada.

November

BOB SHACOCHIS: THE ENEMIES OF IMAGINATION

HARPER'S

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LETTERS

Otto Friedrich Remembered

Unlike Lewis Lapham, I didn't know the writer and editor Otto Friedrich well [Notebook, August], but I knew him vividly, as, I suppose, did anyone who knew him at all. The first time I saw him was in the office of Bill Emerson, editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*. I had just signed a contract with the *Post*, and I was talking to Bill, pitching an idea for an article. Otto, whom I had never met, walked in, listened for a few moments, and without introducing himself said exactly one sentence: "That's the worst story idea I've ever heard." Then he walked out.

Bill waved the disturbance away like a man dispelling cigar smoke and uttered some sweet southernism—"pay no nevermind," or the like. He approved my idea—"why, of course, sounds just fine to me, carry on, smite the philistines"—and I went on to write the thing. It wasn't as bad as Otto had feared, just a bit sophomoric, a sneer at the dead-whale-on-a-flatcar treatment being given to the *Mona Lisa*, then on view at the National Gallery with Marine guards standing at full attention to her left and right.

After I moved away from New York City, I didn't see Otto much. He never touched my copy at the *Post*, maybe because he did not know what to make of prose assaying two facts to the carload. Mostly on instinct, I liked him. Lewis Lapham's eulogy helped me see why; it got exactly right Otto's strange quality of seeming old, although in fact he was only four years older than I.

Otto and I never exchanged three consecutive sentences. Years later, at *Time* magazine, we would meet in the hall, and he would ask what I was working on. "Talking dogs," I would answer, or some such, and he would offer the half-smile of a survivor who had seen better, seen worse. Chatter didn't seem appropriate, and I simply did not know anything that could have added to the furniture already in place in his mind.

I did know enough to value Otto as a rare and outrageous man. I had the feeling, perhaps delusional, that he respected me—on a seen-better-seen-worse basis, of course. So when *Decline and Fall*, his book on the *Post*, appeared, I looked to see if my name was in the index. It was, and the reference was this: "John Skow one of our more irascible writers . . ."

Carve it on my tombstone, though not just yet.

Jack Skow
New London, N.H.

Cyberspaced Out

In the August Forum ["What Are We Doing On-Line?"], John Perry Barlow and Kevin Kelly greatly exaggerated the potential upside of the new electronic-communication technology, while Sven Birkerts and Mark Slouka greatly exaggerated the potential downside. The future, I'm afraid, looks duller: cyberspace will likely go the way of CB radio, which, despite what magazines were predicting fifteen years ago, is now merely one of a hundred pedestrian means by

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

ich people communicate. Quite
n the technology for digitalizing
ech and sending it by e-mail link
l make for what amounts to a
aper kind of telephone. Is it rea-
able to believe that people will
ntinue to use keyboards when
iled of the much quicker and more
nced medium of sound?

The culture of cyberspace may
l turn out to be richer than the
ture of CB radio, but if so, it will
because of the quality of the peo-
involved in it and the organiza-
n of its institutions. At present e-
il is having a salutary effect on the
ality of people's prose. Playing
lti-user dungeon games, for in-
nce, has forced my son to develop
recociously elegant turn of phrase.
w long this effect will last as the
hnology for voice and image com-
nication improves, I do not know.
n the short term, however, cyber-
ce is a royal waste of time. If you
nd in Grand Central station at
h hour, you can hear thousands of
ple but can't make out what any
e of them is saying for the din, and
st of them aren't worth listening
anyway. Surely there are wonder-
people in the crowd, but how does
e find them? In the heady early
rs a certain self-selection ensured
t the people on the Net would be
eresting or, at least, ahead of the
ve. No more. What will make cy-
space interesting is what makes a
gazine readable: good editing.

derick Turner
llas

Discussions such as the August
um can contribute to public un-
rstanding only if the participants
rain from attacking and defending
ological positions that obscure
e more immediate issues at hand.
For one thing, our civil liberties
y very well be at stake in cyber-
ce. Would-be censors are fighting
d to limit the ways in which citi-
s will be allowed to communicate
-line, and they are meeting with
ghteningly little resistance. Few
nericans have ever heard of 1994's
mmunication Assistance for Law
forcement Act; fewer still under-
nd the extent of the snooping pow-
ers it granted the FBI. While we distract ourselves with musings about online pornography and the future of the novel, our freedom of expression itself is in jeopardy. Surely this is worth a line or two of discussion.

Every node on a computer network has the power, unlike TV, to send as well as receive information; every desktop has become a potential broadcasting station. Is this inherently democratizing? Maybe. But could it not also contribute to the fragmentation of the American polity into competing special interests? And how easily can these networks be centrally controlled?

The laws and regulations that the U.S. Congress and various state legislatures are now considering, under the general rubric of "telecommunications deregulation," will have profound effects on our society, and we need to understand the nature of these effects quickly. Our ability to influence the future of communication diminishes

Continued on page 77

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NOTEBOOK

Eyebrow pencils

By Lewis H. Lapham

If one wishes to know the real power of the press, one should pay attention, not to what it says, but to the way in which it is listened to. . . . It only cries so loud because its audience is becoming deaf.
—Alexis de Toqueville

During the first week of September, advance copies of John F. Kennedy Jr.'s new political magazine, *George*, appeared on the New York publicity circuit, defined by its founding editor as "post-partisan" and addressed to the kind of people (very upscale, very hip) apt to think—at least until they meet *George*—that politics are boring and nasty and old. The introductory press conference took place in Federal Hall, in the rotunda where George Washington (the magazine's namesake and totem) delivered his first inaugural address in the spring of 1789. Smiling and at ease in the company of both the dim past and the shiny present, Kennedy greeted the assembled gossip columnists and television cameras by saying, "I don't think that I have seen as many of you in one place since they announced the results of my first bar exams."

His magazine looked a good deal like *Vanity Fair* or *Vogue* (280 glossy pages, delicately scented with an assortment of French perfumes), and in response to questions from the two or three skeptics in the crowd, Kennedy explained (as he also explained in the prefatory note to his 500,000 prospective readers) that *George* was a political magazine from which the politics had been tactfully removed, "a lifestyle magazine" refreshingly devoid of ideas and unencumbered by "any partisan perspective—not even mine," a magazine not unlike a merchandising catalogue, "exuberantly" and "extravagantly" bent on exhibiting political figures as "pop icons" and made to the measure of sophisticated consumers certain to bring to their reading of the Bill of Rights or a speech by Bob Dole the same standards of judgment (discriminating) and taste (exquisite) that they bring to their appreciation of an Armani suit, a pair of Ferragamo shoes, or a Louis Vuitton suitcase.

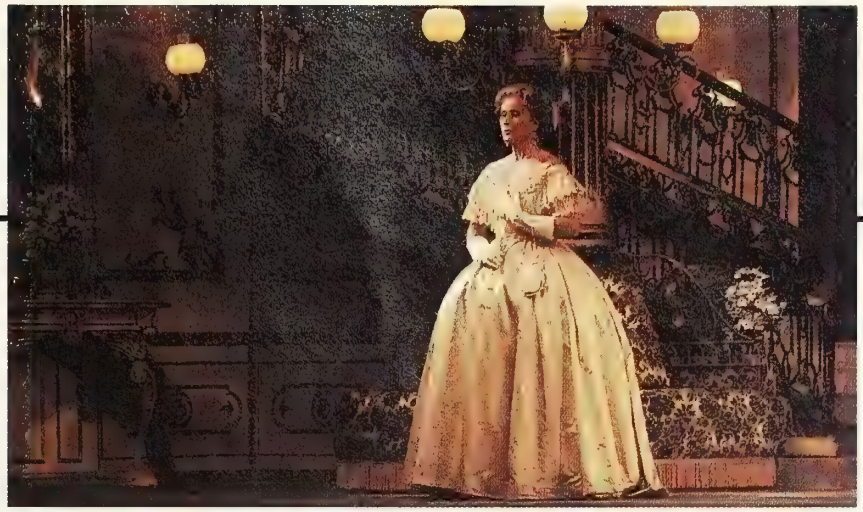
Consistent with the task at hand, the inaugural issue achieved its most striking effects with the advertising, 175 pages of stylish photographs representing all the great and glorious names in the retail merchants' Hall of Fame, not only Armani and Ferragamo but also Tommy Hilfiger, Clinique, Ralph Lauren, Versace, Piaget, Nautica, Valentino, and Donna Karan—the immortals bringing the gifts of the Magi to a cradle of democracy.

The editorial drift of the magazine was color-coordinated with the advertising copy—Cindy Crawford on the cover as George Washington (noble stance, white powdered wig, eighteenth-century American military uniform, bare midriff, satin ruffle); Cindy Crawford on page 12 (in red silk on behalf of Revlon's "Fire and Ice"); Cindy Crawford on page 210 telling women in Washington how to dress ("If I were first lady, I'd only wear black," "Don't get the cheap panty hose," "Tipper's hair is working"). The bulk of the magazine's prose offered a series of variations on the same tone of voice: up front, under the rubric "Primaries," a few words about George Washington ("[He] was a big man—big hands, big feet, big chest"); chatty pieces about the swell parties attended b the swell new Republican operative in Washington ("refined strategy se sions for elite leaders" in "gentee town houses); an account of Jul Roberts on tour among widows ar orphans in Haiti (how Julia suffere at the hands of the cruel news med and how her good intentions we rewarded by a waif who said to he "You're here because you love us" JFK Jr. himself interviewing Geor Wallace, the once-upon-a-tim racist and governor of Alaban (something of a *tour de force* becau the governor is both deaf and mute an endpaper entitled "If I Were Pr ident," in which Madonna confes that "I'd rather eat glass" because president "one day you wake up a find out that you don't have a poi of view or a set of balls"; a lead ess ("The Next American Revolution Now") in which the novelist Ca Carr promotes the new Americ political season in language suita to a report from Paris on the autu clothes, informing the friends *George* that when they really stop think about "all the great issues a events of our day," they, too, w discover what he and John Kennedy Jr. and Isaac Mizrahi a Newt Gingrich's lesbian half-sis and Liz Claiborne and Gianfra Ferre already know: t politics are where it's at.

But if politics were where it's who would have time for *George* political magazine without the pol and with a fashion model for its n of fire? Why write letters to the ed with an eyebrow pencil? The q tions kept coming to mind as I n my way through the text, and by

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time I reached the last four-color photograph (of Madonna swallowing a goldfish) I understood that the magazine would have been more appropriately dedicated to the sacred memory of George III. Here was an expensive collection of celebrities fetchingly arranged in the homespun poses of democratic self-government, but who were the people whom *George* was meant to astonish or impress, and where was the audience for a magazine presenting as its chief virtue the great news that it had nothing to say?

Politics are by definition partisan, because they constitute an argument about power—about who gets to do what to whom, under what circumstances, and for how long and with what degrees of objection or consent. Castrate the quarrel, divorce politics from any meaning that cannot be sold in Bloomingdale's, and what is left except a round of applause for William Kristol's tie and Cindy Crawford's hair?

Kennedy, in his prefatory note, speaks of a "freshly engaged public" and a boisterous crowd of presumptive readers "energized by their anger" and eager to indulge "their passion for politics." He might as well have been referring to the immense crowd of well-adjusted and perfectly conditioned people on Planet Reebok. During the 1994 election—the one that all the swell people in the first issue of *George* were talking about as the Second Coming of Christ the Republican—no more than 39 percent of the electorate turned up at the polls, and of those who did, only 25 percent knew the names of their senators or representatives. The country's genuinely political journals circulate among small numbers of readers, and few television public affairs programs command audiences large enough to qualify for a single ratings point. I don't know what kind of crowds the editors of *George* encounter on the great American plains, but in my own wanderings around the country over the last several years I've noticed that without the backing of the Christian Coalition or the addition of large celebrity (personages on the order of Elizabeth Taylor or Henry Kissinger) political meetings tend to consist of twenty or thirty people whose hair isn't working, seated on folding chairs in a small room, asking questions either bitterly partisan, hopelessly irrelevant, or terminally paranoid—studio audiences sometimes positioned for the C-Span cameras to suggest the illusion of a quorum.

The general lack of interest in political affairs corresponds to the general disaffection for anything and everything modified by the adjective "public." For twenty years the drum majors of the Republican parade band have been beating time to the same ideological refrain—private schools, private prisons, private suburbs, private roads, private money, private police—and by now even the crippled remnant of the Democratic Party has come to acknowledge the sovereignty of private means over public ends. All things bright and beautiful flow forth from the clear mountain streams of the private sector; all things vicious and ugly rise from the swamp of the public sector. Power derives its legitimacy and authority from the mints of private wealth, not from the coinage of public thought, and people who once might have thought of themselves as citizens now tend to think of themselves as the vassals of a commercial overlord.

Corporations of the magnitude of IBM or Citibank constitute themselves as what Renaissance Europe would have recognized as city-states, sovereign powers employing as many people as once lived in Philadelphia in 1789. When it suits their interests, they send their agents to Congress (as they did last spring with respect to the telecommunications and environmental bills) to write the necessary laws. A man without a company name is a man without a country; it is no longer the political commonwealth that furnishes him with a pension, medical insurance, club membership, credit cards, meaning, and a common store of experience. As recently as a hundred years ago most Americans lived in small towns arranged around a public square or green, a community consisting of a school, a courthouse, and a church, and our range of observation was available free of charge. Now we must pay for what goes by the name of common experience at the stadium, the cineplex, the mall, and we define ourselves as the sum of our possessions or the collection of our ticket stubs.

George proceeds from the assumption that the important political decisions take place in private (at the Federal Reserve Board, on one of the Disney Company's airplanes, over breakfast at the Willard Hotel), that what Versace has to say (even in Italian) is a good deal more interesting than who gets elected president of the United States or what the Congress says to itself about the balanced budget or the war in Bosnia. But in the meantime somebody has to keep up appearances, maintain the fiction of a national political debate, make lists of Senator Alfonse D'Amato's favorite songs and pasta dishes, organize the props and lighting for what John F. Kennedy Jr. (again in his prefatory note and attributing his insight to his lifelong access to the best seats in the American grandstand) calls "the giant puppet show that can turn public people into barely recognizable symbols of themselves."

On or about the same day that Kennedy introduced his new magazine to the ladies and gentlemen of the press in Federal Hall, General Colin Powell set forth on a twenty-five-city tour to promote his autobiography, *My American Journey*, and the two events were as well matched as Cindy Crawford's accessories—a political campaign that wasn't a political campaign, a post-partisan candidate refreshingly devoid of controversial views, a politician from whom the politics had been tactfully removed, a fall fashion statement (noble stance, twentieth-century military uniform, firm jaw, many medals) made to fit the cover of everybody's magazine. The news media hustled the general into the limelight with the effusive haste of a starving mob in a besieged city welcoming the arrival of a relief column. The country was said to be in desperate straits, exhibiting ominous signs of moral rot and social decay, and here at hand was a great captain embodying all the old-time American virtues believed

have gone AWOL from a Saigon in the summer of 1969. Within a tter of a few days in September, vell appeared before the talk-show neras with Barbara Walters and Leno, *Time* magazine published a 00-word excerpt from the Ran- n House book (500,000 copies pped, $6 million author's ad- ce), and newspaper columnists of persuasions abandoned them- ves to a frenzy of praise—"classic dier-statesman," "a president for seasons," "transcends politics," otographic memory." Powell not y was a hero—a man who had wer-walked" with Presidents Rea-, Bush, and Clinton—but he was black, "America's black Eisen- wer." Not *too* black, of course, not black that he would scare any- ly, but black enough to stand as a bol of payment for a long-over- debt, allowing white people to gine—at least for the time being d while being questioned by the nion polls—that they were toler- and kind and wise, so emancipat- from racial prejudice that they ld seriously entertain the prospect black man in the White House.

n the small print behind the dress form and the glittering adjectives, general didn't quite come up to promise of the ad copy. A deft self-promoting careerist, he ap- ently had risen through the ranks never doing or saying anything t ruffled the surface of the consen- already present in the briefing om, an officer so disinclined to e risks that he worked out a doc- ne of guaranteed victory, commit- g the United States Army only to se wars that it could easily win referably in deserts, never in untains), a military bureaucrat so lled in the arts of camouflage that Vietnam in 1968 he adroitly de- ed discovery of the My Lai mas- re, and in Washington in 1986, on staff of the secretary of defense, arranged the illegal transfer of ns to Iran, blandly failing to recall 14 times) any knowledge of the nt at the subsequent congression- hearings—in brief and in sum, an commodating man who once told *Washington Post* that "issues come d go" but "process" lives forever.

Nor did his book, or at least those fragments of it that I read in *Time*, contradict the impression of a latter-day Polonius. The general told the story of his life as a series of uplifting homilies consistent with the plot lines of television situation comedy—strong family ties, up from poverty in the South Bronx by dint of good conduct and hard work, off to the army, which he embraced as "my home . . . my life . . . my love," aide-de-camp to a series of important people in and around the White House, lots of power-walking, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. On the questions that threatened to veer off into the swamp of politics, the general let issues come and go and stayed steadfastly with process. Yes, he had "Republican leanings," but he was also "a New Deal kid"—conservative but not too conservative, a believer in "discipline" but also a strong supporter of "compassion," vague about abortion and capital gains taxes, solidly in favor of mother and the flag.

Reading the general's text, I remembered, having once been told, that during the fall of 1941, when the German tanks had advanced to within ten miles of Moscow, the managers of the Soviet Union placed a wax dummy of Joseph Stalin in a lighted window of the Kremlin, high enough up off the street to escape close inspection but near enough to sustain the illusion of a godlike presence. Stalin the man might have been in a bomb shelter or the Crimea, but Stalin the wax figure, tireless in his labors and impervious to fear, remained stolidly at his post, the great leader alone in his study, seated calmly at his desk, directing the armies in the field, and summoning from the impregnable soil of Mother Russia the strength of 10,000 armored divisions.

The United States in the autumn of 1995 isn't as badly off as Moscow in October 1941, but still it is a comfort to see Colin Powell and Cindy Crawford high up in the lighted windows of the news media and to know that if they really put their minds to it, either singly or together, they could probably summon from the pages of the imperishable American past the mighty spirit ("big hands, big feet, big chest.") of *George*. ■





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HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of campaign funds raised by presidential candidates as of June 1995 to the amount raised as of June 1991 : 77:1

Campaign funds raised as of June 1995 by the major Republican presidential candidates : $50,049,048

stimated number of primaries that had occurred in 1992 by the time major Democratic candidates had raised this much : 41

hange since February in the percentage of black Americans who say they have an unfavorable opinion of Colin Powell : +20

Change since September 1994 in the percentage of Americans who say they have no opinion of Bill Clinton : +6

Chances that an American member of the Libertarian Party joined within the last five years : 1 in 3

Chances that a Texan who registered to vote during the first six months of this year did so in a welfare office : 1 in 5

Percentage of Americans with a household income between $5,000 and $10,000 who voted last year : 23

Percentage who voted in 1990 : 31

verage amount a current member of Congress has received from telecommunications-industry PACs since 1985 : $34,942

Federal funds budgeted through 1999 to assist U.S. phone companies in making their lines easier to tap : $500,000,000

Federal funds spent on maintaining nuclear testing operations since U.S. testing was halted in 1992 : $1,185,600,000

Ratio of the number of CIA employees to the number of U.N. employees, worldwide : 4:3

Number of international human rights treaties the U.S. violated this year by allowing Alabama to reinstate chain gangs : 2

Estimated percentage change since 1991 in the number of Brazilian workers engaged in forced labor : +400

Estimated number of years that Ireland's Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams received British public assistance : 10

Number of years by which Russian president Boris Yeltsin has outlived the average life span of a Russian male : 5

ercentage increase Yeltsin proposed last year in the number of signatures required to run for the Russian presidency : 1,900

Percentage increase signed into law in May : 900

Change since 1993 in the width of the slot in a Mexican ballot box, in millimeters : –7

Percentage of Mexican adults who are registered to vote : 88

Percentage of American adults who are : 62

Price of *The New Hampshire Primer*, a how-to book on winning the first presidential primary : $9.95

Estimated number of books banned since 1965 in Indonesia : 2,000

ice Fiji began charging this year for guaranteed citizenship to each Hong Kong resident who wishes to move there : $70,970

Number of illegal Vietnamese immigrants the German government plans to deport over the next five years : 40,000

Acres of English farmland purchased by the Mormon Church since 1993 : 8,879

Estimated number of Druids in Britain : 7,500

Estimated number of cricket players in the United States : 5,500

Percentage change since 1992 in the number of Americans who play touch football "frequently" : +19

Chances that a hard-core rap album sold in the U.S. last year was purchased by a white person : 3 in 4

Percentage of American adults who say they could not "survive" without a television set : 19

Number of American women who purchased their first new chain saw within the last two years : 1,037,000

Price of a man's solid gold Nelson Mandela Commemorative Timepiece, from Hope Industries of New York : $5,000

First prize offered in the Colin L. Powell Joint Warfighting Essay Contest, established in April of last year : $2,500

Number of entries received in the contest's first year : 67

umber of "Snapple enthusiasts" who attended the first Snapple Convention, held last summer in a New York suburb : 3,800

Number of strikes bowled at Rob & Carol's Frozen-Turkey Bowl, held last November in Modesto, California : 0

Age, in years, of the oldest frozen turkey about which Butterball's hot line has ever fielded a "freshness" question : 23

Average life span, in years, of a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon : 25

Figures cited are the latest available as of September 1995. Sources are listed on page 64.
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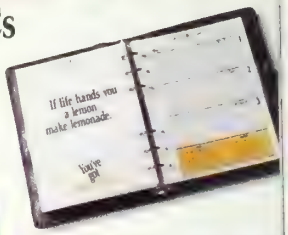
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READINGS

[Speech]

THE ENEMIES OF IMAGINATION

From "The Politics of the Imagination," by Bob Shacochis, in the Fall issue of Point of Contact, *a biannual published by Syracuse University; the essay was originally given as a speech at a conference on "Writing Across Cultures," held last year at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Shacochis is a contributing editor of* Harper's Magazine. *His report on Haiti, "The Immaculate Invasion," appeared in the February issue of* Harper's.

At the Miami Book Fair last November, waiting to read from my novel *Swimming in the Volcano,* which is set on an imaginary Caribbean island, I sat onstage and listened as Bob Antoni introduced me. Antoni, who was born in the States but grew up in the Bahamas, had just published his first novel, *Divina Trace,* about life on another imaginary island, modeled after Trinidad, where his family had lived for three centuries. In his introduction, he said something that made me cringe and that incensed the author sitting next to me—a black Trinidadian who had emigrated to Harlem long ago—so much that he shook his head wildly and hissed, "Bullshit!"

What Antoni said was this: "Sometimes Shacochis writes about the Caribbean as if he had been born there. Sometimes he writes about the Caribbean as well as or better than those of us who were born there or grew up there."

During another book fair, this one in Orlando, I was in a hotel lounge, having a drink with two old friends, the Canadian-American writer Clark Blaise and his wife, Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian-American writer. Mukherjee was born into a wealthy and influential high-caste family in Calcutta, where she was educated by nuns and Englishwomen. In the early Sixties, she went off to the United States to study at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she met and married Clark. Since then, she has become one of North America's most renowned novelists and short-story writers.

That afternoon in Orlando, Bharati told me a story about another Indian woman who had come to the United States to study. This woman was not as highborn as Bharati, but she succeeded in getting a scholarship to California State University at Fresno, where she earned her doctorate in contemporary literature. Her dissertation was on Bharati's work, and it excoriated her for writing about people of whom she knew nothing: lower-class Indian and Pakistani immigrants and a wide variety of born-in-the-USA types. Bharati, the scholar argued, was far too privileged to be able to know and understand the lives of such people, let alone write about them.

"What she seeks to do," said Bharati, "is assassinate my imagination."

The aesthetic espoused by Bharati's detractor has serious consequences. If we, for political reasons, are not allowed to write about a place we've never been, or write about people whose

lives we can understand only through the imagination, then literature and art will be stuck in the self-reflective light of the here and now, a solitary place inhabited only by the solipsistic *me*, a landscape from which the collective *us* has been exiled. In this view the ultimate goal of literature is either narcissism or self-loathing, the writer a rapacious beast who is better off boxed within a cage of mirrors.

What is so eerie is that so many American writers have already, of their own volition, put themselves in that cage. Since the Vietnam War, American fiction has turned markedly inward, assiduously avoiding anything foreign or "other." Today's novels tend to be set at the mall, the university, the farm; in the small town, the neighborhood; on the Upper West Side; within the nuclear family—in short, the places where writers feel most comfortable. No one seems to have the strength or the desire required to write in a bold and sweeping manner about our lives and our homeland, or about how our lives and our homeland fit into a bigger picture. Rather, the modern writer favors the present tense and the first person, rejecting the macrocosm for the microcosm, exercising an imagination that never leaves home or, worse, never leaves the self.

Because it is untempered by a spectrum of experience, the prevailing sensibility in American fiction is one of self-gratification and self-pity; it breeds a confused, dispiriting moral dandyism of the sort we see spouting from someone like Bret Easton Ellis. In his defense of *American Psycho*, Ellis complained that he grew up in a culture so violent, corrupt, and stultifying that he arrived at the gates of adulthood totally immune to shock. But I assure Mr. Ellis that if he got up off his backside and took a stroll through the Occupied West Bank, or stopped in for lunch at a Rwandan refugee camp, or drove his BMW from Baghdad to Basra, or visited the Haitians in the Krome Detention Center in Miami, he might find, finally, a small bijou of shock to take home and treasure.

Despite what I've just said about the insularity of American literature since Vietnam, I still believe there's reason for great optimism. In fact, I believe the past fifteen years or so have constituted a golden age in American literature because those who have been cast to the periphery by the centrifuge of Western history and the dynamics of American power are telling their stories in greater numbers than ever before. I love this. I am obsessed with this theme, so much so that it is one of the foundations of my fiction.

I try to write about people finding their own strength, discovering their own voice, and I don't care what skins they inhabit, where they live, what their sex or sexual preference happens to be, or what their ethnic, racial, and religious components are. I write about white males and white females. I write about nonwhite females and nonwhite males. I write about people who are heterosexual and those who aren't. I write about North Americans and people who are not North Americans. In short, I write about the world as I have witnessed it and the people I have found there.

I've just identified six kinds of humanity that appear in my work. Some critics would have me limit myself to one. By writing about the other five, I am guilty, these critics suggest, of exploitation, of imperialism of experience and

[Appeal]

CHER JACK

From an open letter to French president Jacques Chirac, by Bob Millington, in his June 16 column in The Age, *a Melbourne, Australia, newspaper. In June, Chirac announced that France would resume its nuclear testing program by staging a series of underwater explosions in the South Pacific.*

AN OPEN LETTER TO M. JACQUES CHIRAC

Mon cher Jack:

Je suis a bit fromaged off avec votre decision to blow up La Pacifique avec les Frog bombes nuclears. Je reckon vous must have un spot in La Belle France itself pour les explosions. Le Massive Central? Le Quay d'Orsay? Le Champs Elysées? Votre own back yard, peut-être?

La guerre cold est fini, Sport! Votres forces militaires need la bombe atomique about as beaucoup as poisson need les bicyclettes.

Un autre point, cobber. Votre histoire militaire isn't tres flash, consisting, n'est-ce pas, of batailles the likes of Crécy, Agincourt, Poitiers, Trafalgar, Borodino, Waterloo, Sedan, et Dien Bien Phu. Un bombe won't change le tradition. Je/mon père/mon grandpère/le cousin third de ma grandmère/la plume de ma tante fought avec votre soldats against La Bouche in World War I (le Big One). Have vous forgotten?

Reconsider, mon ami. Otherwise in les hotels et estaminets de l'Australie le curse anciens d'Angleterre—"Damnation to the French"—will be heard un autre temps.

Votre chums don't want that.



© ESTATE OF DIANE ARBUS, 1995

From Untitled, *a new book of photographs by Diane Arbus, most of them previously unpublished, published by Aperture. In an afterword to the book, Doon Arbus, the photographer's daughter, writes that "the photographs were taken at residences for the mentally retarded between 1969 and 1971, places [Arbus] kept going back to every few months or so, to picnics, dances, on Halloween, in the last years of her life."*

imagination. Being a white male, they say, I cannot ever understand the experience of a female, especially a black female.

I would argue that the only way I could possibly establish empathy with a black female, the only way I could possibly begin to understand her, is to try, in good faith, to imagine my way into her life. I don't think there's a more powerful and positive act in the world than this. From this act comes compassion; from this act comes honesty and, one would hope, equality.

The power of this act of the imagination, this act of transference, is not to be underestimated. For instance, it seems to me that any male who can successfully imagine his way into the experience of a woman who's been raped would never perpetrate such a crime—not after he has felt, through his imagination, her terror, her shame, her profound violation, as if it were his own.

This transference is an affirmative act and a creative right that I cannot relinquish, no matter how much it might offend certain critics. Indeed, I believe *more* writers should exercise this right, not fewer. We already have plenty of examples, in Ellis and his peers, of how quickly solipsism leads to absurdity and, worse, to the death of empathy.

Can you imagine an Anglo burn victim telling Michael Ondaatje that his brilliant book *The English Patient* is an act of exploitation because he, Ondaatje, is not English but Sri Lankan, and because he has never had serious burns all over his body? Can you imagine a member of the British Parliament dismissing *The Remains of the Day* because it was written by a Japanese immigrant? This point of view would require us all to lock ourselves in our rooms and masturbate. It is perverse. It is obscene. Ultimately, it doesn't matter from what culture, or skin, or gender, the voice of consciousness comes. It only matters that it does come and, when it arrives, that we recognize it.



"Memory Seekers," by Renato Tosini. Tosini's paintings were on display last spring at the Dover Street Gallery in London. He lives in Palermo, Italy.

[Fiction]

BARBARA BOXER'S DREAM COME TRUE?

From an unfinished, unpublished novel written in 1973 by Barbara Boxer; in 1993, Boxer was elected to the Senate from California. The excerpt below serves as the "beforeword" to her autobiography, Strangers in the Senate: Politics and the New Revolution of Women in America, *published by National Press Books in Bethesda, Maryland.*

The television announcer's voice came in clearly over the noise and excitement of the crowd: "The California U.S. Senate race is still too close to call."

Voices hushed as the mass of bodies crowded around the twenty-inch tube that was their link to reality. It was this media box that would let them know if their hours of licking envelopes, soliciting contributions, and walking door-to-door had been worth it.

In the middle of the crowd at campaign headquarters stood Carol Wynn. At five feet three, with shining black hair and blue eyes—like Elizabeth Taylor's," her mother would say—Carol could have been the attractive woman selling soap, cereal, or sewing machines in a myriad of television commercials. But Carol Wynn wanted to be a U.S. senator from the most populous state in the union.

Carol had been elected the most popular girl in her high school, and she looked ten years younger than her thirty-seven years—something that drove Ted Hunter, her campaign manager, crazy. "For God's sake, Carol, do something with your hair—add a little gray or something," he'd plead.

But when Carol Wynn spoke, it didn't matter what she looked like, because the audience was caught by her voice. Her words were the words of a secure and intelligent candidate, a caring and humane leader. That's why the race was so close. That's why she was in it at all.

Carol looked at the nervous, anxious faces of the people hovering around the TV. Exhausted, she nonetheless made a tremendous effort to pull herself together and climbed to the podium to address her campaign workers. Immediately there was silence.

"My beautiful people," she began, "—and tonight you *are* mine, you are a part of me—for six months we have followed a path together. I was placed on that path by you, and you have

guided me along it. It has been difficult and sometimes hazardous, but because of you, I found my way. And whatever happens tonight, I'll continue to find my way."

"We'll win tonight, Carol!" cried the voices from the crowd. Applause rang through the headquarters. Tears welled up. Hands reached out for other hands.

"I will be here tomorrow morning at 10:00 A.M. no matter what the results," Carol continued, "and I will want to be with all of you. Can I count on that?"

A deafening "yes" came back to her.

Carol grabbed her purse and raincoat and walked among all the familiar and worried faces, touching hands, kissing cheeks; she left with Ted guiding her through the crowd. Outside, the rain was beating down. Carol lifted her face to welcome the cool drops of rain.

[Q&A]

DOLE GOES FOR THE BUSH THING

From the transcript of an August 30 question-and-answer session with Bob Dole, following a presidential campaign reception that Dole hosted at the Balsams Grand Resort Hotel in Dixville Notch, New Hampshire. The question below was posed by Elliot Maza, an investment banker from Englewood, New Jersey. The exchange was transcribed by Kevin Merida, a staff writer for the Washington Post.

ELLIOT MAZA: Recently I went to see the movie *Apollo 13*, and what struck me was how the nation was so caught up with the space program at that time. And I was wondering: what can you suggest to us today as something that we can get caught up in or look to to motivate us as a people?

BOB DOLE: Well, let me say first about the space program, I think you're exactly right. I haven't seen *Apollo 13*. I want to see it. I just saw *The Fugitive* the other night. We've got a lot of videos, but we're not there to watch them. So *Apollo 13*'s coming up.

You know what I think we ought to do? Maybe it sounds a little old-fashioned, maybe I'm a little old-fashioned, but I think what we ought to do is for young people, and you ought to be out there helping us, we ought to be standing up and talking about family values. I'm not getting into any philosophicals. I'm talking about the value of children, the value of family. You know, I went out to Hollywood. I made a speech on Hollywood in '93 on the Senate floor—nobody cared. I made another one in '94—nobody cared. When I went to Hollywood and made a speech about the entertainment industry, a lot of people cared. And *Time* magazine cared. They're getting rid of some of the people. They may sell Interscope. Today they may buy CNN, or whatever.

So shame is a powerful weapon. They say, "Oh, we have our First Amendment rights." I'm not talking about censorship of television, of these little discs you can buy with this filthy, awful language on it that your child can buy anywhere, or television. But television violence and all the things that happen on television. I'm talking about leadership, the bully pulpit, integrity, character, standing up and asking the American people.

I want to stress what I just suggested, then there'll be some other things to come along in the technology. We don't want to give up on the space program. I know it costs money, but once we lose the edge of technology in this country, we're out, we're out of it. So we want to keep the edge.

[Incidents]

IVIED HALLS, ROOFTOP FALLS

From a thirty-eight-page "chronology of college hazing incidents" in Broken Pledges: The Deadly Rite of Hazing, *by Hank Nuwer, published by Longstreet Press in Atlanta.*

1905

Columbia College: Freshmen from the class of 1909 defied Columbia's new anti-hazing rule by painting their class year on a fence and shouting, "Quack, quack, quack, quack, 1908," in unison at sophomore class members. A brawl began between the classes. The school's president and a dean passed by without interrupting it.

1908

University of Oregon: Upperclassmen ducked a freshman in a bath of icy water, and he ran away in terror. He was committed to a mental institution and locked in a padded cell.

1945

St. Louis University: Phi Beta Pi pledge Robert Perry was made to lie naked on a table and receive shocks to his skin, which was coated with collodion (a substance used in film develop-

[Witness]

HE LEADETH ME TO TAHOE

From an interview with Shawn Craddick, a twenty-four-year-old snowboarder, in the March/April issue of This Prophecy, *a magazine published in Lewis Run, Pennsylvania, that features articles on "skating, music, and Jesus." The interview was conducted by David Kindervater, the magazine's editor.*

DAVID KINDERVATER: How's California this winter?

SHAWN CRADDICK: Pretty fun in Big Bear. Tahoe and Mammoth are ruling! I just have to give thanks for snow anywhere.

KINDERVATER: Halfpipe versus slope style—do you care?

CRADDICK: Slope style is me and what I'm about, but I give big props to halfpipe rulers.

KINDERVATER: How did you come to know the Lord?

CRADDICK: Kele Rosecran introduced me to what God was all about. For that, I give thanks. I would like to give full props to Kele—he rules on a skate so hard! And my grandparents, who raised me—full props to them. They are both so down with the Lord! I love them with all my heart.

KINDERVATER: What's happened in your life lately that you've been talking to Jesus about?

CRADDICK: My grandfather just passed away this summer. When I pray, I always ask the Lord to say "Hi" and that I love him. Every day he used to drive me to the beach and kick back while I surfed.

KINDERVATER: Do you ever hook up with other skaters or snowboarders for fellowship?

CRADDICK: No, and it's upsetting. Everyone seems so into partying every night.

KINDERVATER: What is your witness to others?

CRADDICK: On all my boards I tag the fish symbol. I ride with Summit and Mammoth teams, and I give them a pat on the back and try to be a positive role model.

KINDERVATER: What would your life be like without Jesus at the center of it?

CRADDICK: Upside down, that's for sure. But Jesus lets me ride every day and get paid. Now my snowboarding is excelling and Jesus is right at my side and there are no limits. I just need to give thanks.

ing) and lampblack. A spark from the shocks ignited; Perry went up in flames and died.

1959

University of Southern California: Richard Swanson, a Kappa Sigma pledge, choked to death on his third attempt to swallow a thick, oil-soaked piece of raw liver roughly the size of a club sandwich. Six other students had successfully swallowed liver before Swanson's attempts.

1962

University of Southern California: Harold Davidson "began gasping for air" during an initiation exercise at Zeta Beta Tau in which pledges passed raw eggs to one another by mouth. He suffered from "hyperventilation and mild shock."

1976

Manhattan College: State police pulled over five cars in Carmel, New York. Three seminude Sigma Delta Beta pledges—coated with a mixture of beer, honey, molasses, and eggs—were being forced to sit in an open convertible in forty-degree weather.

1980

San Diego State University: Sigma Chi was suspended for filling a pledge's pants with peanuts and glue, and then wrapping him in toilet paper.

1981

University of Nebraska: A Kappa Sigma pledge said he suffered extensive dental damage when he was struck accidentally in the mouth with a chair while eating a pie off the floor in a required pledging exercise.

1982

Towson State University: Victor Siegel, an Alpha Omega Lambda pledge, had been deprived of sleep for days when he passed out at the wheel of a car that flipped over, killing him. Siegel was dressed as a Playboy bunny when he died.

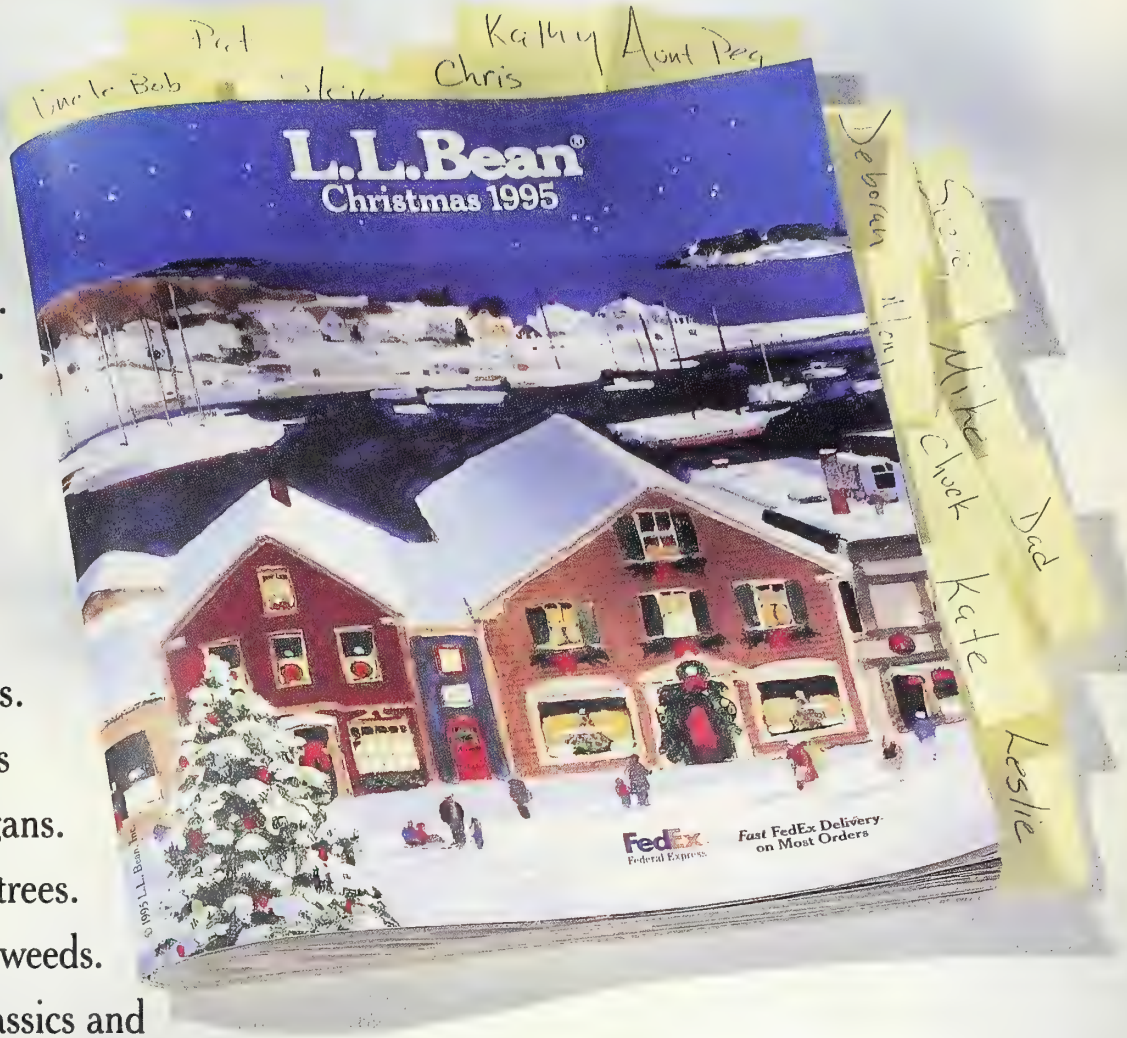
1985

Florida Southern University: A dean observed five Phi Sigma Kappa pledges jogging around Lake Hollingsworth with ten-pound weights. The pledges insisted that they were merely trying to get ready for basketball season. Previously they had been seen toting a ninety-pound tombstone around the lake.

1987

Kansas State University: Sophomore Jeffrey Nolting fell from a roof and died of massive head injuries. Students were engaging in an annual ritual that involved flinging stereos, televisions, and other equipment off the roof of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house.

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From Shooting the Lone Ranger, *a series of photographs by Thomas King. King photographed Native American artists wearing a Lone Ranger mask in order to illustrate his theory that the Lone Ranger was actually a Native American in disguise. Pictured here are Michael Kabotie, a Hopi painter, at left, and Richard Ray Whitman, a Yuchi Comanche artist, at right. King's photographs were featured in the Summer issue of the* Hungry Mind Review. *He lives in Toronto.*

[Field Work]

THE FINE ART OF FITTING IN

From In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio, *by Philippe Bourgois, to be published next month by Cambridge University Press. Bourgois, an associate professor of anthropology at San Francisco State University, lived for five years in East Harlem in order to study crack dealers' "web of beliefs, symbols, [and] modes of interaction."*

Before I was able to establish my first relationship with a crack dealer, I had to confront the overwhelming reality of racial and class-based apartheid in America. The first time I walked home from the subway station, I went down a side street that, it turned out, was a heroin "copping corner." Everyone began scattering in front of me as if I had the plague; all of a sudden the block was desolate. On this occasion my feelings were hurt; it was as if my white skin had signaled the terminal stage of some kind of contagious disease.

I had moved to East Harlem in order to document the racial segregation and economic marginalization imposed on the neighborhood's residents. In my first months on the block, though, I didn't spend my time contemplating the complex theoretical issues involved in poverty and ethnicity. I was primarily concerned with how to persuade Primo, the manager of the crackhouse on my block—known as the Game Room—that I was not an undercover police officer.

I remember vividly the night I first went to the Game Room. My neighbor Carmen—a thirty-nine-year-old grandmother whom I had watched become addicted to crack—tried to introduce me to Primo. Staring out into the street, he asked Carmen in English, loud enough for me to hear, "What precinct did you pick him up at?" I hurriedly mumbled an embarrassed protest about wanting to write a book. I had the good sense not to impose myself, however, and after buying a round of beers, I slunk into the background. Even in my largesse I managed to prolong the awkwardness: I pur-

chased the wrong kind of beer—an un-streetwise brand that Primo did not like.

Despite my inauspicious first evening, it took less than two weeks for Primo to warm up to me. I was aided by the fact that I had to pass the Game Room several times a day. At first Primo and I would just nod politely to each other, but one day he called out, "Hey, guy, you like to drink beer, don't you?" and we shared a round of Private Stocks with Maria, his fifteen-year-old girlfriend, and his current lookout, Benito—anglicized into "Benzie."

A few hours—and beers—later, Primo invited me into the back of the Game Room. My pulse quickened. The crack supply was hidden behind a false linoleum panel, and he laid out a "dime bag" of powder cocaine. "You like to sniff?" he asked. When I declined, I was surprised to find that both Primo and Benzie were thrilled to be hanging out with someone who was "such good people" that he did not even "sniff."

It was not until three years later that Primo would casually describe me to others as "the white nigga who always be hangin' with me." I still remember the night when I first graduated to "honorary nigga" status. Primo had imbibed more alcohol than usual, and I had walked him up to Maria's sister's high-rise project apartment to make sure he didn't get mugged. Upon our safe arrival, swaying in the doorway, he grabbed me by the shoulders to thank me: "You're a good nigga, Felipe. You're a good nigga. See you tomorrow."

Five years after I first met Primo and Benzie, they told me what their first impressions of me had been. It was during New Year's week in the stairwell of Primo's mother's high-rise project, where they had gone at 2:00 A.M. to sniff a "speedball" (a combination of heroin and cocaine).

PRIMO: When I first met you, Felipe, I was wondering who the hell you were, but you sounded interesting so, of course (*reaching for the cocaine*), *te recibi como amigo, con respeto* [I welcomed you as a friend, with respect].

BENZIE (*interrupting and handing me a bottle of malt liquor*): Felipe, I'm going to tell you the honest truth. The first time I met you, I thought that you was in a different way. But I would really rather not tell you (*sniffing from the heroin packet with Primo's key*).

ME (*drinking*): It's all right. Don't worry. You can tell me. I won't get angry.

BENZIE: Yeah, well. (*Turning to Primo to avoid eye contact with me and sniffing again*) Yeah, you remember, Primo? I used to tell you, you know, the way he used to talk. The way he used to be. That I thought maybe, you know—how you call it? That some people are bisexual. Even though you had a wife, I thought you was, like, dirty. It was really 'cause of the way you talk and 'cause of the way you act. You always asking a lot of questions, and a lot of gay people be like that—you know, trying to find out the way you are. But then after a while, when I got to know you (*grabbing the bottle from me*), I saw the way you was hanging, and I

[Phrase Book]

GARDENING MADE SIMPLE

From Easy Spanish for Lawn & Garden, *published by Mitchell Brothers Press in Phoenix. According to the publishers, "The sole purpose of this book is to help bridge the language gap by improving communications between employers and employees." Some of the Spanish phrases have been simplified in order to make the book easy to use.*

Let's go to work.
Vamos a trabajar.

Mow the lawn.
Corte el cesped.

Water the garden.
Riegua del jardin.

Edge around the sprinklers.
Corte alrededor del aspersor.

Plant the flowers six inches apart.
Plante las flores separados por seis pulgadas.

Apply weed poison where necessary.
Pongale veneno a la hierba si es necesario.

Take out the trash.
Saqua la basura.

Sweep the tennis court.
Barra la cancha de tenis.

Wash off the driveway.
Reigue el estacionamiento.

Keep the gates closed.
Manten cerradas las puertas.

Don't let the dog out.
No deje salir al perro.

Roll up the hose.
Enrolla la manguera.

Not like that.
Asi no.

Like this.
Asi.

Understand?
Comprende?

[illegible] thought in my head, "Man, this nigga's a faggot." (*drinking*)

[illegible] You're going to give Felipe a *complejo* [complex]. (*Putting his arm over my shoulder*) It was just 'cause you was white. He was thinking, "*Quien es este blanquito?*" [Who is this white boy?]

ME: So was it my accent? My voice? The way I move my body?

BENZIE: Yeah, like your accent—

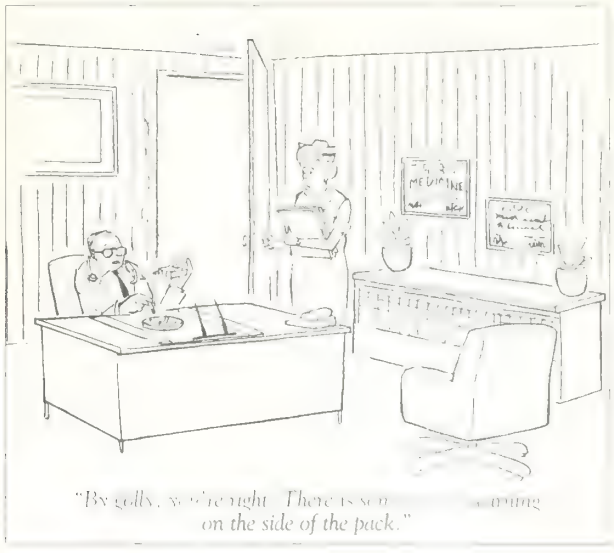
PRIMO (*interrupting*): I told him you were an anfropologist [*sic*], and that the way you speak is just like intelligent talk. I mean, you just speak your way. And maybe we don't understand a few words, but it's all right.

When I first heard this, I could not stop myself from feeling some kind of vain personal pique at having been misidentified sexually, because by that time I fancied myself to be at least minimally streetwise. In retrospect, I am relieved that during the first few years of my field work I thoroughly misread street cues and did not suspect that I was giving off "dirty sexual pervert" vibes. Being self-conscious about my own image might have interfered with my getting to know the crack dealers comfortably.

Regardless of the complexities of racial tension, class polarization, and everyday street style, in the long term I felt at ease in my role as "professor" and "anthropologist." I had originally worried that the main characters in this book might resent the fact that an outsider was going to build an academic career out of their life stories, so I made sure to discuss with my neighbors my desire to write a book that might contribute to a more progressive understanding of inner-city problems by mainstream society. They thought I was crazy. In their conception, anyone in their right mind would want to write a best-seller and make a lot of money. It had never occurred to them that they would get anything back from this project, except maybe a good party on publication day. On several occasions, my insistence that my research should produce a tangible political benefit for the community spawned humiliating responses. From Primo's best friend, Caesar:

> Felipe, you just talking an immense amount of shit. Because we talk huge amounts of crap that don't mean a goddamned thing—into the air. Like, we on Oprah Winfrey or the Donahue show—which doesn't mean shit. That's not going to help the community. It's not going to help us. It's not going to change the world an eensy-weensy bit at all. It's just talk. Flap the lip.

Of course, I hope Caesar is wrong; but maybe his cynicism is more realistic than my academic idealism.



"By golly, you're right. There is so [illegible] on the side of the pack."

From The Spectator.

[Essay]

AN INDEFENSIBLE BUDGET

From "Notes from the Underground: An Outsider's Guide to the Defense Budget Debate," by William D. Hartung, in the Fall issue of the World Policy Journal. *Hartung is a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute in New York; he is the author, most recently, of* And Weapons for All.

In the middle years of the Bush Administration, General Colin Powell was faced with the greatest challenge of his illustrious military career. Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked to head a study group charged with addressing the truly frightening question—from the Pentagon's perspective, at least—of how the Department of Defense might continue to justify its hefty budget in the absence of the Soviet threat that, for the previous four decades, had been the all-purpose justification for any and every new military weapons system. The Powell team's solution to their quandary was the so-called two-war doctrine: the idea, which still guides Pentagon policy making, that the United States needs to be prepared to fight two major regional conflicts of Desert Storm proportions *simultaneously*.

The most threatening scenario Powell's team



rom a series of photographs of dickcissels in flight taken by Gianfranco Basili, a doctoral candidate in wildlife ecology at ıe University of Wisconsin. Each winter the small songbirds migrate, in flocks of millions, from the Great Plains of Jorth America to Venezuela. Basili's photographs were featured in the September issue of Natural History.

could conjure in a post–Cold War world was the prospect of going to war against heavily armed regional powers run by unstable tyrants and equipped (or soon to be equipped) with weapons of mass destruction—in short, countries such as Iraq or North Korea. On the off chance that Saddam Hussein and Kim Il Sung were to attack U.S. interests at the same time, the Powell group reasoned, the safest course would be to be ready to fight both of them at once. Conveniently, this meant only a slight scaling back of the military forces of the Cold War era, from about 2.1 million troops under arms to a "base force" of 1.6 million, with corresponding adjustments in the numbers of ships, tanks, and aircraft needed to equip this smaller force. From the perspective of the Pentagon and the defense industry, Powell's plan looked like a significant downsizing, but given the fact that it was premised on a sharply diminished Soviet threat, it was actually quite a modest reduction.

As the years passed, many of the underlying assumptions that precipitated the Powell plan were nullified by events. The Warsaw Pact dissolved, the Soviet Union definitively broke up, and a U.S.-led coalition of over two dozen nations overwhelmingly defeated Saddam Hussein's forces in the 1991 Gulf War, leaving Iraq with less than half its former military strength. One would think that these radical changes in the "threat environment" would have prompted a reassessment of Powell's base force. But no such reassessment was ever made. Bill Clinton's first secretary of defense, the late Les Aspin, conducted a "bottom-up review" of defense spending in 1993 that concluded that Washington could perhaps slightly shave back the Powell plan from 1.6 million troops to 1.4 million if the United States adopted a "win-hold-win" strategy toward the dreaded two-regional-conflict scenario. "Win-hold-win" essentially meant holding one adversary at bay while beating the hell out of the other, then moving on to defeat the second. Skeptics in the military derided the Aspin plan as "win-lose-lose," and he quickly re-embraced the original two-war plan.

Apart from ignoring major changes in the world's geopolitical environment, the two-war scenario lacks any rational basis as a guide to U.S. defense strategy for the post–Cold War era. As Merrill McPeak, who served as the air force chief of staff from 1991 to 1994, has said,



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Front Legroom	43.3"	40.9"	42.4"	42.5"	42.5"

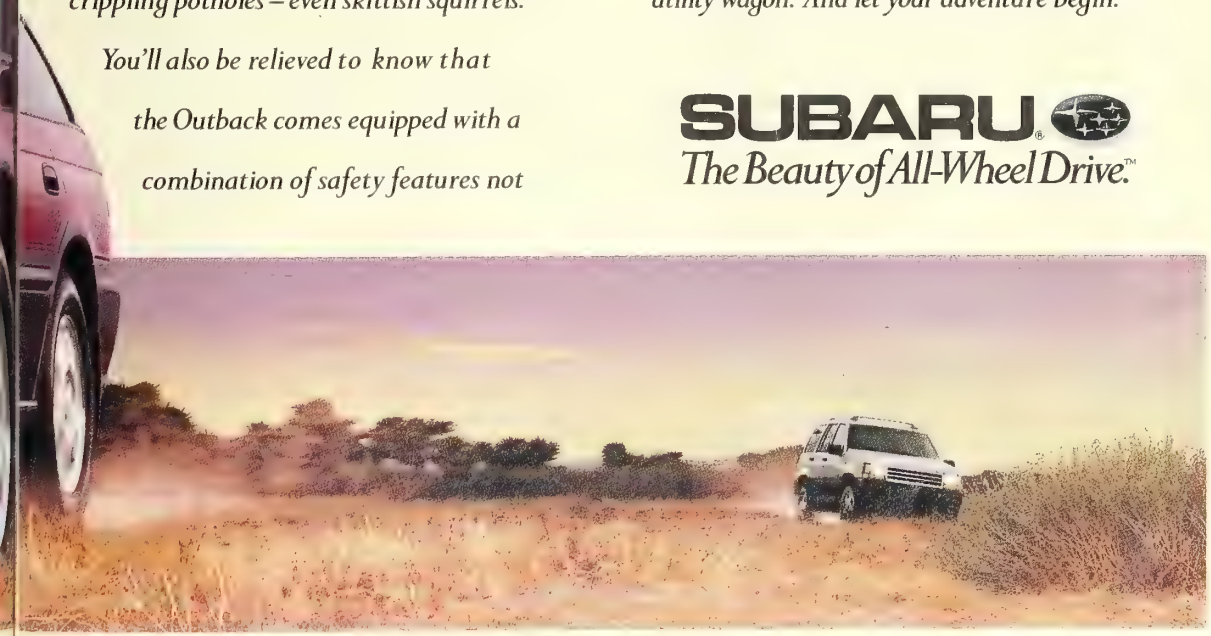
1996 EPA estimate. Subaru Outback 4EAT. City 20/Hwy 26. Use for comparison only. Your actual mileage may vary.

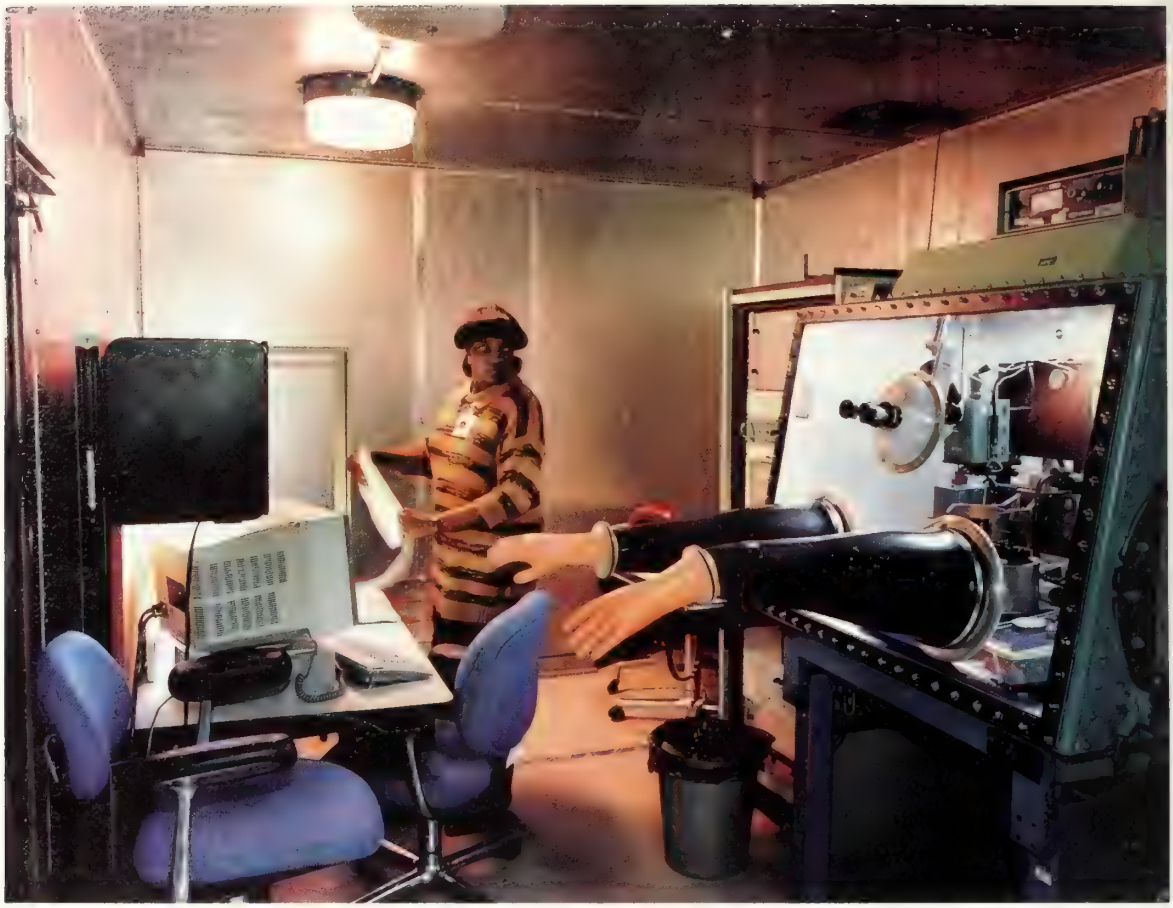
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The photograph above, by Paul Shambroom, a Minneapolis artist, was taken at the Texas Instruments microchip plant in Dallas. It is part of Paul Shambroom: Hidden Places of Power, *an exhibition of the artist's photographs of factories, offices, and nuclear-weapons sites on display this fall at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.*

"We should walk away from the two-war strategy. Neither our historical experience nor our common sense leads us to think we need to do this. We've had to fight three major regional contingencies in the past forty-five years [Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq]. One comes along every fifteen years or so—two have never come along simultaneously."

If one accepts the warped logic of the two-war doctrine, it is virtually impossible to expect major additional cuts in the Pentagon budget. But other than a few independent voices, hardly anyone in a position of political authority has dared to question the doctrine, for fear of being labeled "soft on defense." It is a lot safer to be soft on defense contractors and rake in the contracts and campaign contributions that inevitably follow.

In the current environment, the two-war doctrine is unlikely to be seriously challenged. And even if it were, this summer's congressional debate over the future of the B-2 "stealth" bomber shows just how difficult it will be to move from the petty politics of military appropriations to a realistic appraisal of defense budgetary needs.

Even veteran defense budget analysts on Capitol Hill have been taken aback by the bizarre quality of the arguments used by the B-2 bomber's proponents, who are hoping to save the program from being terminated by the Pentagon after a production run of twenty planes at a minimum cost of $44 billion. It was great sport to watch industry lobbyists and their allies in Congress assert that a bomber designed to cruise over the Soviet Union after a nuclear war and mop up stray military targets could easily be transformed into a conventional bomber that could go anywhere and bomb any target. It would have been far *more* amusing if these jury-rigged arguments had not managed to carry the day when the House voted on the defense authorization bill in early June. That vote raised the real possibility that the

Pentagon could end up buying another twenty B-2s, at a cost of more than $31 billion.

Despite overwhelming evidence that the plane does not work—including a General Accounting Office study that found that after fourteen years of development and six years of testing, the mighty B-2 still can't tell a rain cloud from a munitions plant—B-2 advocates are unmoved. Many describe it in near-mythological terms, betraying a naive faith in the magic of air power. During the House debate, B-2 advocates Norman Dicks (D., Wash.) and Duncan Hunter (R., Calif.) were peddling the fantastic theory that Capt. Scott O'Grady, the American pilot who was shot down in Bosnia, would never have been in danger had he been flying a shiny new stealth bomber. The notion that a $2 billion strategic bomber would ever have been used for such a routine mission is beyond absurd.

The B-2 may not be needed to defend the country, but it is definitely needed to defend the flow of Pentagon dollars to California and other defense-dependent states. The June victory of the B-2 in the House drew heavily upon the votes of members with B-2 contractors in their districts, including liberal Democrats such as Congressional Black Caucus member Maxine Waters (D., Calif.). Waters was at least honest enough to admit that she did not care whether the plane was needed or not; she simply saw no other way to channel federal funds and jobs to her economically embattled district. Defense spending, it appears, has become the only truly invulnerable form of federal aid.

The ultimate irony underlying all of the sound and fury in Washington over the B-2 is the fact that the battle is being waged over a plane that the Pentagon itself has said in no uncertain terms it does not want. In addition to the opposition of Secretary of Defense William Perry, an independent heavy bomber study funded by the Department of Defense concluded that the twenty B-2s already on order, in tandem with the existing force of B-1s and B-52s, are more than adequate.

Like the two-war doctrine, the B-2 fiasco shows how narrow and entrenched the Washington defense budget debate has become. What's missing is the larger view, the one that counts security as preeminent. The nation's interests will not be appropriately defended simply because Washington sets aside a large chunk of the GNP for military purposes. The money has to be spent wisely on weapons systems and training regimens that prepare U.S. forces for the kinds of conflicts they will actually have to face. Unfortunately, Washington prefers to see the defense budget debate not as a forum to consider the defense of the nation but as a fight for a bigger piece of the pie.

[Emendations]

ERNEST HEMINGWAY, SCRIPT DOCTOR

From a letter written in 1942 by Ernest Hemingway, then living in Cuba, to Donald Friede, a Hollywood agent who had represented Hemingway in the sale of the movie rights to For Whom the Bell Tolls, *Hemingway's novel about the Spanish civil war, to Paramount for more than $100,000. In late February or early March of 1942, Friede sent Hemingway a draft of the script, by screenwriter Dudley Nichols, for Hemingway's reaction. The letter is part of a series between Hemingway and Friede that was discovered recently by writer Peter Carroll while he was researching his book* The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; *the letters appeared for the first time in the Summer issue of* The Antioch Review, *with the cooperation of the Hemingway Foundation.*

Finca Vigia San Francisco de Paula, Cuba
March 16, 1942

Dear Donald:

I was glad to get your letter, but somewhat amazed at your attitude about the script. You should never have sent it to me, nor should Dudley Nichols have expected you to send it to me without expecting me to do something about the ignorant, the inept and the dangerously wrong phases of it.

I can see how much worse Dudley's script could have been. There is no question about it at all, nor that he has tried to follow faithfully much of the book. But there is no reason to condone fatal ignorance, bad writing and bad construction in the script of a picture which means as much as this picture means. It can be a great picture or a disastrous flop and Dudley has taken a terrible responsibility in the way he has bitched it up.

To start with the script, following Nichols' apologetic note about length, there is a page headed, "People." Under the band of El Sordo one character is called Rinaldo. This is an Italian name, not a Spanish one. I suggest the substitution of the name Paco or Enrique or Segundo.

On page A-38 the scene with Anselmo and Jordan where they watch the sentry at the bridge is horribly ham. Anselmo says that the sentry looks like a man from his village and then whispers, "Yes, he looks like the son of Sanchez. He is very young." Sanchez is as common a name in Spanish as Smith here. Even if Anselmo were to make such a ham remark he would say, "The son of Domingo Sanchez or Rodrigo Sanchez," but never "the

son of Sanchez" any more than you would say "the son of Smith of Chicago." The whole scene is very bad and should be rewritten. It loses all tensity through the bad philosophical blah-blah uttered at a time when men would only whisper to each other about the most practical details.

Because I am so severe where the script is wrong, do not think that I do not appreciate the good parts that Dudley has done, but this is like a battle, and there is no time for praising something that has gone properly. The defects must be corrected and where no censure or praise is given, it means that one understands what the man has done with what he has had to work with.

On page 58 where Jordan says, fed up, "Go to bed. I told you I am no assassin." It is much better to say, "Go to bed. There is no need to kill now." He would not chuck that word assassin around, offending everybody and talking in such a high faluting way. If you are to make the picture credible, Jordan must have some sense in his handling of the people and also I am against these horrible hammy phrases, such as on page 59, "You know Pablo better than I do. Is there danger of treachery?" This should read, "You know Pablo better than I do. What will he do?" This has equal menace in it without the use of such hammy words in conversation as treachery.

On page 61, why should Jordan say, "Yes. More safe"? Why not say, "safer"? He is supposed to be able to speak both English and Spanish without having to go into pidgin English to show that he is speaking in a foreign language.

On page 71 please use the word "planes" or the Spanish word "aviones" instead of "air machines." Air machines is as idiotic and corny used in Spanish or with Spanish people as if you would have someone referring to flying machines instead of planes in the American Army. The same holds true for that horrible corniness about the "machinery gun." The audience know that these people are Spaniards and are foreigners and it is not necessary to make them idiots.

On page 85, Gustavo is middle-aged and wears long mustaches. I think this is the same Italian influence that got the other guy called Rinaldo. There haven't been any long mustaches on a Spaniard in the last 100 years. Please keep long mustaches off everybody in the picture unless you are prepared to furnish little cartons for the audience to vomit in for the South American trade.

Reading over the Maria and Jordan scenes up until page 121, they are probably the best that Dudley could get out of what he was ordered to do. They are quite unreal and not at all credible but they are in motion-picture tradition of what happens between two people of the opposite sex and have been carefully styled to Gary [Cooper, the film's star]. People forget what a good actor Gary is and how many things he can do besides hesitate and seem embarrassed at the thought of any emotion. I think he had hoped in this picture to get away from this but Dudley has fed

[Aesthetic]

NANCY DREW'S MORAL UNIVERSE

From the "Series Bible" for Nancy Drew, *a syndicated television program based on the Nancy Drew mystery novels. The show, which premiered this fall, is being produced by New Line Cinema, Nelvana Limited, and Marathon. The guide, which is used by the* Nancy Drew *staff, describes the show's characters, themes, and tone; the section excerpted below is titled "Style."*

Nancy has a unique ability to make clear choices. She lives in a moral universe that is simple and straightforward. When we are in her world, those values will be reflected. It is something she cannot escape from, nor would she want to—it is her quintessential "Drewness." This quality is expressed in her wardrobe. She chooses clear, saturated colors that reflect her moral certainty. When Nancy wears green, it's not olive or sea foam or celadon. It's *green*. And the design is always deceptively simple, regardless of how au courant the particular outfit may be.

Even at her young age, Nancy brings order to chaos. The objects in her apartment radiate a feeling of security; they have a timeless quality that is impossible to date. This creates a sense of heightened reality: a sofa is a *sofa*, not art deco or faux country or Seventies chrome and leather. It has a pure design that reflects a sofa's essence, its *truth*. Visually, Nancy's world will make sense.

The world outside her apartment will have a very different look. It is the world of unsolved mysteries, a place filled with cold, glaring light and turbulent disorder, where colors are always garish or muddy. It is a world expressed in harsh angles and exaggerated perspectives, because it is totally lacking in moral certainty. Basically, it can best be described as a world without Drewness.

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"Kitchen," by Liza Lou, an installation that will be on display in January at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City. To make the 200-square-foot room, Lou, a San Diego artist, built life-size sculptures of cabinets, curtains, dishes, pots, food, and other kitchen items out of wood, plaster, and other materials; she then covered them with small glass beads using tweezers, glue, and a magnifying glass. Lou estimates that she used five million beads to create "Kitchen," which she began in 1991. In a statement accompanying the installation, she writes, "I am going to bead the world."

steadily to those two abilities of his rather than to what he is really able to do. It makes me sick to see what has been done and how a picture which can be a great picture and still not run afoul of any Hays office has been cut in all the love part up until page 147 into the stupidest conventional shy-dope-meets-pure-young-thing-who-has-suffered. Neither of these people had much time for shyness but I can see how well Dudley has been cutting it to what they said they would take. If that was not the circumstance, then he ought to be shot.

If I sound bitter in this, please throw it out, the bitterness or any rudeness or insults. I am trying to be accurate and correct in a hurry and it is like being on a boat. There is no time to say, "Please cast off this," or, "Please make this fast." The politeness is understood and throw out the rudeness. But everything I say I mean absolutely and sincerely. Only do not be offended by the fact that I have to be tough and say it in a hurry.

Best regards to yourself and to Dudley Nichols.

Yours always,
Ernest

[Interview]

EVERY MINUTE ACCOUNTED FOR

From an interview with Robert W. Shields, author of the world's longest diary, in Holding On, *a book by David Isay, a public radio reporter, and Harvey Wang, a New York City photographer, to be published this month by W.W. Norton. For four years, Isay and Wang traveled around the United States interviewing and photographing "eccentrics, visionaries, dreamers, believers: men and women in pursuit of* something." *Isay interviewed Shields at his home in Dayton, Washington, in 1993, when his diary was 34,263,395 words long.*

ROBERT W. SHIELDS: I turned seventy-five last May. I'm a retired secondary school teacher and an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. I also do writing. I started twenty years ago keeping a diary. Complete for twenty years. Every minute accounted for. What takes place, whether I'm sleeping or whether I'm awake. If I remember the dreams

I put the dreams in. It's an uninhibited diary. Tell all, show all. I don't leave anything out. Here's the inventory for this past year: October 25, 1992, to October 25, 1993—1,100,000 words. I used to do three to four million words a year, but I had a stroke two years ago and it slowed me down. As far as I know, this is the longest diary in the history of the world.

I start the diary each day at midnight by typing "GOD." That's "Genesis of the Day." Like today: From GOD to 12:05: I peed. I read for a few moments from the Swedenborg Spiritual Diary, but I was too tired to take it in. 12:05–3:05: I slept nearly three hours. I dreamt, but the dream escapes me. 3:05–3:10: I discharged urine. 3:10–3:20: I was at the keyboard of my IBM Wheelwriter making entries for the diary. I took the four medications listed in the right-hand margin: Lopressor—50 mg; Procardia—60 mg; Trental—400 mg; and aspirin. I took the readings given in the margins: Humidity, 52 degrees. Porch temperature, 45 degrees. Porch floor temperature, 40 degrees. Study temperature, 77 degrees. Door temperature in the study, 74 degrees. My hips ached, so I was bent over acutely and had to hold on to furniture to move about.

DAVID ISAY: Let me stop you for a second. You've taped something to the bottom of this page.

SHIELDS: That's nostril hair. For DNA purposes. In years to come they might be able to figure out my genetics from a physical artifact.

ISAY: And what's this?

SHIELDS: Whenever I purchase anything, like meat particularly, I peel the stickers off and put it in the diary, because then there's a record of how much we bought and what the price of it was. I also put in calling cards, menus from restaurants—everything.

10:00–10:05 I groomed my hair with a scrub brush.
10:05–10:10 I fed the cat with tinned cat food.
10:10–10:20 I dressed in black Haband trousers, a pastel-blue Bon Marché shirt, the blue Haband blazer with simulated silver buttons, both hearing aids, eyeglasses, and the 14-degree Masonic ring.
10:20–10:25 I tried to pick a spot of Krazy Glue off my black trousers that got on them yesterday. I was unsuccessful. Maybe it was Friday that I spotted them. I put a dab of liquid black shoe polish on the blemish and it helped some.

ISAY: How did this all start?

SHIELDS: I had a diary back in high school and college, but it was just intermittent. Desultory. Then I thought, "Well, why not every minute of the day or night? Why not tabulate every minute?" That was 1972. Fall of that year. And it just kept going.

ISAY: Why are you doing this?

[Story]

STICKS

By George Saunders. From the Winter issue of Story. *A collection of Saunders's stories,* CivilWarLand in Bad Decline, *will be published in January by Random House. His novella* Bounty *appeared in the April issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Every year Thanksgiving night we flocked behind Dad as he dragged the Santa suit to the road and draped it over a kind of crucifix he'd built out of metal pole in the yard. Super Bowl week the pole was dressed in a jersey and Rod's helmet and Rod had to clear it with Dad if he wanted to take the helmet off. On the Fourth of July the pole was Uncle Sam, on Veterans Day a soldier, on Halloween a ghost. The pole was Dad's only concession to glee. We were allowed a single Crayola from the box at a time. One Christmas Eve he shrieked at Kimmie for wasting an apple slice. He hovered over us as we poured ketchup, saying good enough good enough good enough. Birthday parties consisted of cupcakes, no ice cream. The first time I brought a date over she said what's with your dad and that pole? and I sat there blinking.

We left home, married, had children of our own, found the seeds of meanness blooming also within us. Dad began dressing the pole with more complexity and less discernible logic. He draped some kind of fur over it on Groundhog Day and lugged out a floodlight to ensure a shadow. When an earthquake struck Chile he laid the pole on its side and spray-painted a rift in the earth. Mom died and he dressed the pole as Death and hung from the crossbar photos of Mom as a baby. We'd stop by and find odd talismans from his youth arranged around the base: army medals, theater tickets, old sweatshirts, tubes of Mom's makeup. One autumn he painted the pole bright yellow. He covered it with cotton swabs that winter for warmth and provided offspring by hammering in six sticks around the yard. He ran lengths of string between the pole and the sticks, and taped to the string letters of apology, admissions of error, pleas for understanding, all written in a frantic hand on index cards. He painted a sign saying LOVE and hung it from the pole and another that said FORGIVE? and then he died in the hall with the radio on and we sold the house to a young couple who pulled out the pole and left it by the road on garbage day.

SHIELDS: It's an obsession, that's all I can say. It's an obsession. I don't know. I really can't answer that. Sometimes I wonder why I impose it on myself, and then I say, "Well, I'd rather do this than do nothing." I want to be busy every minute of the day or night that I can be busy. If you're idle, that's a bad sign. It's not good to be idle. It's my makeup. It's my nature, I suppose. I'm not boastful about it. It's just something that I do. Like an artist would do something, like an author would do something, like an architect would do something. So I do this. That's all.

ISAY: How does your family feel about this?

SHIELDS: Never asked them.

10:45 Grace and I left the house in the blue 1959 state police cruiser.

10:48 We left the post office after dispatching mail. It was 62 degrees.

10:49 We passed McQuary's Grocery at 301 Main Street, Dayton, WA 99328.

10:55 We passed the entrance to Lewis and Clark Trail State Park. It was a sunny day, halcyon weather, summer skies.

11:00 Denver Page's Waitsburg Chevron station, 125 Preston Avenue.

11:09 Summit of Minnick Hill. Jct. of the freeway with Lewis Peak Road.

11:11 The middle of Dixie, WA 99329, traversing a culvert.

11:15 Intersection of the freeway with Spring Creek Road.

11:17 State police weighing station. The scales were not in service today.

11:20 Intersection of the freeway with Spring Creek Road.

11:23 The Prime Cut Restaurant, 1760 Isaacs.

11:29 I ordered a breaded fish fillet and a baked potato, and Grace ordered a shish kebab. The fish was $1.99 and the shish kebab was $2.99.

ISAY: Do you read the diary?

SHIELDS: No, because if I read it I wouldn't have time to do anything else.

ISAY: What about leaving town?

SHIELDS: I don't leave town. I haven't left town since 1985. I don't like to be away overnight, because it gets me behind. If I travel to Walla Walla to do shopping it puts me behind in the diary. I have to take notes all the time, and when I get back it takes me almost a day to catch up with the notes. So I avoid going out. I avoid being away.

ISAY: What happened when you had your stroke?

SHIELDS: I kept handwritten notes in the hospital bed by the minute of every time the nurse came in or anytime I thought about anything. I was only three or four days in the hospital. It was a very light stroke, but it took me days to catch up.

12:20–12:25 I discharged urine.

12:25–12:30 I stripped to my thermals. I failed to mention that the *Tri City Herald* weighed in this morning at 1 lb., 11 1/2 oz. It was the heaviest paper we have ever had to my knowledge, lacking only 1/2 oz. of being 1 3/4 lb. Think of that.

12:30–12:50 I ate leftover Bumble Bee Alaska red salmon, about 7 oz., while I guzzled 10 oz. orange juice and read *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

12:50–1:45 I was at the keyboard of my IBM Wheelwriter making entries for my diary.

1:45–2:00 I picked up the dining room table so that Grace could prepare dinner for Dave Isay and Harvey Wang. I put things away. I washed my hands.

ISAY: We've been talking here for about forty-five minutes. Does that make you nervous?

SHIELDS: No, no. I've got it caught up to four-thirty today, and I know what's happened since.

ISAY: Do you feel like the diary controls you?

SHIELDS: I feel like I'm in control. I could stop it at any time.

ISAY: What would it do to you if you just stopped?

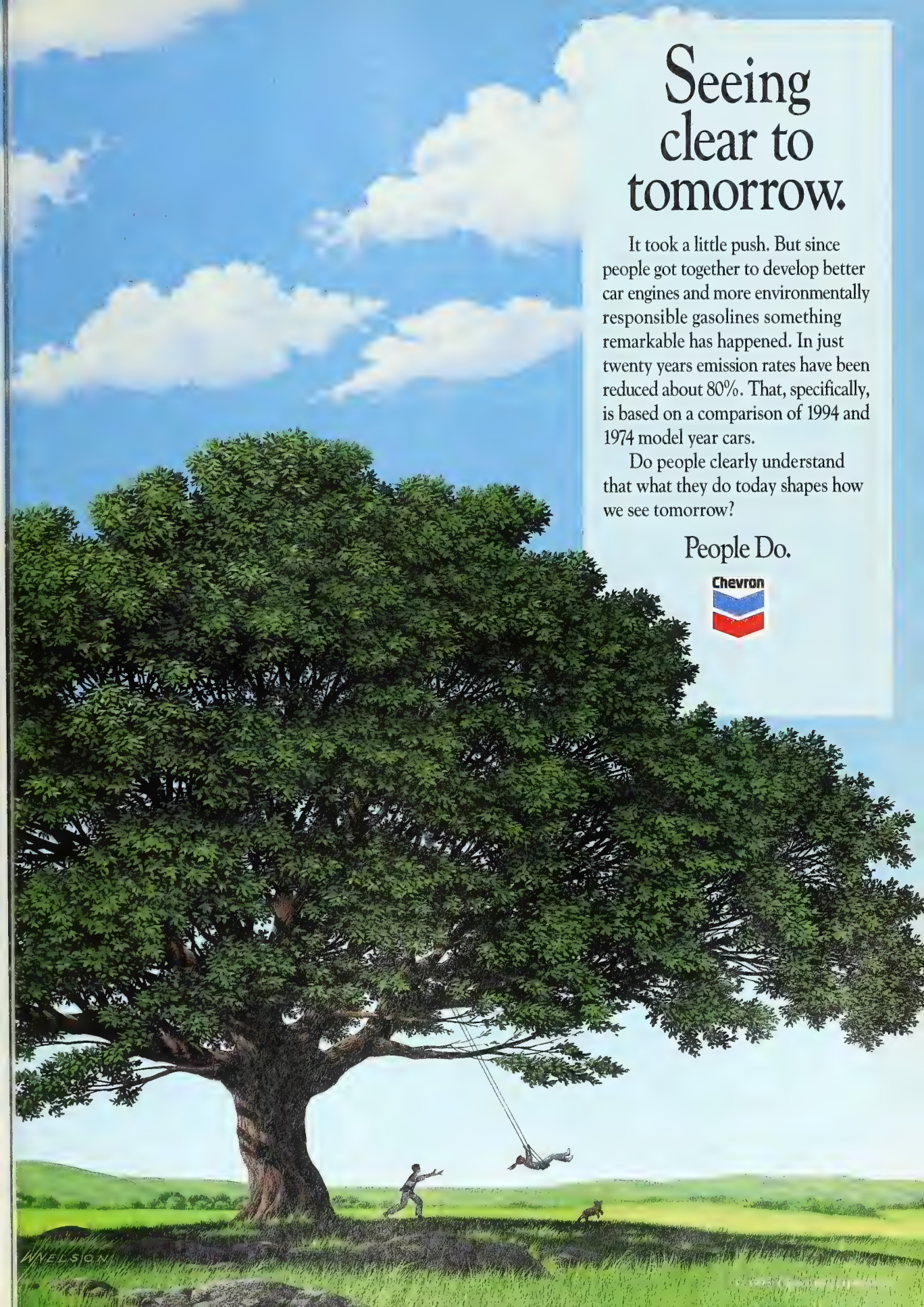
SHIELDS: It would be like turning off my life.

6:10–6:15 Dave Isay and Harvey Wang arrived. I told them to park the car in the driveway, and we shut the gate. It was Halloween night, and there is no use in taking any chances.

6:15–6:20 I showed them my 1959 Ford Washington State patrol car. I lifted the overhead door on the garage and they went in. I have a ceiling light in there.

6:20–6:30 Harvey set up his camera (a Hasselblad) in the study, and Dave Isay set up his recording mechanism. They wanted to be in the room where I worked.

6:30–8:35 The first thing was that Dave detected a hum. I was not aware of it, but it turned out to be the electric baseboard heater. We turned it off. The bathroom heater kept us warm enough. We left the door to the bathroom open. He had a great many questions written down. I could not answer some of them: Why did I write the diary? What started me? Did the inspiration come suddenly at a distinct time to keep it? (It did not, but developed in 1972.) Did I keep any unusual artifacts in the record outside of nasal hairs? (I kept the nasal hairs for DNA purposes in the hope that they would reveal something about my genetics.) He had me read through my diary for today, noting the times, and examining the format and the content for a week back. He wondered if anyone was reluctant to talk to me for fear it would wind up in the diary. I said very rarely, not as often as once every three or five years. He was amazed at the extensiveness of it and how neatly it was kept. It is a total record, covering or accounting for every minute of the day and night. I said I did not know why I kept it, especially since it is doubtful if anyone would ever read it. It is a compulsion. He asked whether I intended to keep it up until I die and I said yes. It is impossible for me to give any motivation for it, except that when I am gone, the words that I have written will be the only thing that survives. ■


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WINTER WORK

Diary of a day laborer

By Don J. Snyder

Though winter was nearly a month away, the mornings were cold, and I would go to the beach and fill a canvas bag with wood to build a big fire in the living room so that when my four kids got up there would be one warm place where they could get dressed for school. This was better than turning on the furnace. I had lost my college teaching job eighteen months earlier. We were down to our last $200 the morning I saw what I thought at first was just a mirage that you sometimes see when the tide is out and the sunlight shimmers off the mud flats like ribbons of heat off a highway. It looked like hundreds and hundreds of wooden ladders standing on the ledges half a mile away. I kept walking until I got close enough to see clearly the enormous wooden frame of a structure that looked much too large to be a house.

We were living in one of the most beautiful places on earth, in a summer colony in Maine called Prouts Neck, a place made famous in Winslow Homer's watercolors. On Labor Day, we had arrived ten minutes too soon, with everything we owned jammed into our rusted station wagon. Somehow a frying pan fell out of the rear window, startling the man who was putting suitcases into the trunk of his Mercedes. Soon workmen boarded up the other houses after their owners left for the great cities of the East, and we had the place to ourselves. We had picnics at the private beach club and rode bicycles over the boardwalk that ran through the bird sanctuary. It was like stumbling upon some wonderful set left behind by a summer stock theater. My five-year-old son and I trespassed at the golf course, stole balls from the rough, and sold them at the end of the road for a dollar apiece. On the clay tennis courts, I taught one daughter how to hit a decent serve.

I kept thinking I would find another teaching job, but eventually we reached the point where my wife, Colleen, stood in line for food stamps and I stood in line for work at the Maine employment office in Portland. In front of me a thin man in a ripped windbreaker with SPORTSMAN'S LOUNGE lettered across the back was yelling at the woman behind the counter, "I have my tools, I can do that job!" She held her ground, and the Vietnamese man behind me whispered sadly, "No address, no job." I had brought along *Herzog* by Saul Bellow and I pretended to be reading it, hoping to look careless. When it got to be my turn, the lady handed me a brochure that the city published with forty-seven helpful hints for the unemployed: "Have the cable disconnected from your television set. Look for coupons in the newspapers."

I waited for my interview and began writing out another budget in Bellow's novel. I'd written these budgets in neat columns of numbers in the margins of every book I'd read since I was fired, dividing the next year into monthly payments, subtracting it right out of existence. For rent, food, heat, electricity, telephone, and gas, $1,535 a month—a sum that should not be terrifying to a forty-four-year-old man.

I got home just after noon and was wiping the kitchen table when Colleen came in carrying our three-year-old daughter, Cara, who was crying at the top of her lungs. "I slammed the door on her finger," Colleen said sorrowfully as she set Cara down on the counter and took off her blue mitten. Then I heard her scream. "Her finger came off! The top of her finger came off, Don!"

It was more than the bills for the emergency room and the hand surgeon that carried me back to the house to ask for a job. It was the memory of me just standing there in the

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Illustrations by Gwyn Stram

itchen inside my fears, taking all that time to el sorry for myself while Colleen zipped Cara nside her down coat and ran outside into a snowstorm heading for the hospital seven miles away.

I walked back to the house the next morng, very early, I guess to show whoever was in harge that he could count on me not to be te for work. A hard wind had kicked up big aves in the cove. I gazed across the rocks. The ood frame rose three stories from the founda-on, each story twelve or fourteen feet high. I uessed the structure to be eighty feet by forty et, with a roof line that was fifty feet from the round. There were four carpenters climbing nd descending like acrobats hrough the wooden frame and trailng long hoses behind them that supplied the air for their pneumatic ammers, which went off like gunhots in the stillness.

Before I walked out into view, I ook off my woolen hat and scarf and uffed them in my coat pockets to y and look like a guy who wasn't othered by the weather.

Larry, the contractor, was workng with a vibrating saw that he eld like a machine gunner. He ropped the saw with disdain when e spotted me and swung down hrough the frame, jumping the fial four feet. He looked happy and t enough to build the place by imself, but I'd chosen the right day o hit him up for work. We stood alking in the midst of an equation hat even his ferocious energy ouldn't change: there was a mounain of a house left to build and a retch of blistering cold days ahead in which o build it.

It would be outside work, all winter: there was he rest of the plywood sheathing, then the hole structure had to be wrapped, then the indows and doors, roof, trim, decks, and porchs. He went through it all as if it would fall into lace like it had a thousand times in his head. Maybe a month and a half of shingling alone," e said. "Have you put on cedar shingles before?"

I lied to him for the first time. "It's a big ouse," I said, looking up to the roof.

"It's a dream," he said. He told me it was almost 13,000 square feet and that it might end p costing a million dollars to finish.

I liked him instantly and felt bad that I was oing to have to hide from him the crushed isk in my back and everything that I didn't now about carpentry.

"We start at seven. Ten-hour days. I'll pay you fifteen dollars an hour," he said.

"I'll start tomorrow morning," I said.

"Just bring your carpenter's belt," he said as he jumped back onto the framed wall and began climbing. He was above my head when he called out, "You have a carpenter's belt?"

I lied to him again.

I hadn't earned a penny in eighteen months, but by the time I reached the electronic gate at the end of Winslow Homer Road, I was dreaming of buying Colleen a new dress and taking her out to dinner.

Later that day I took all four kids with me to Wal-Mart to buy a carpenter's belt. I tried it on for them and showed them the leather pockets



for a tape measure and knife, the pouches for nails, and the clip that would hold my hammer. We gave Cara a ride on the mechanical horse. I'd spent a year trying to convince them that we weren't poor, just broke, and now I wanted them to see me spend some money.

When I got up the next morning, I turned the heat on and listened to the furnace kick in. One hundred and fifty bucks before the day was over. Seven hundred and fifty when the week was done. Three thousand by Christmas.

At six I made a thermos of tea and two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, then put on all the warm clothes I had. It took me about as long to dress as it had to put on my goalie equipment when I used to play ice hockey. On top I wore the heavy quilted greatcoat that my

father-in-law had found in his attic from the nights he worked the docks in South Portland.

At six-thirty I left the house with the empty carpenter's belt hanging from my waist. The sand along the shore was frozen as hard as cement. I wore the only boots I owned, a pair of Wellingtons, and I could feel my toes going numb by the time I reached the main road. Across the cove the islands were swimming in plum-colored light, and a small parade of fishing boats reached to the horizon.

I stepped inside the house through an opening in the studs where a chimney was going up. It was like standing within the ruins of a great cathedral with vaulted ceilings and high walls and long, wide floors. Waves pounded the rocks, and the freezing sky was falling through the open roof. It seemed a struggle was taking place. The house itself looked as much like it was being torn down as being built.

I FELT STRANGE UP ON THE SCAFFOLDING. WIND WASHED OVER ME, AND LIGHTNESS FILLED MY LUNGS

Larry arrived just as I finished rubbing my new carpenter's belt in sawdust to try to make it look old. He got out of his truck with a pot of coffee in one hand and a canvas attaché case in the other. Under one arm he had a roll of blueprints. He yelled good morning, asked me if I didn't own any better boots, and gestured with the coffeepot to follow him.

"We've got to get this beam up," he said, setting everything down on the plywood floor. I took a look at it. Thirty feet. Three hundred pounds. My wife's mother, a nurse, had lectured me about stretching exercises since I had crushed a disk in my back dragging a rowboat the spring before, but I was of the unenlightened old school of athletes: I believed that stretching was for the self-righteous joggers who crept along the side of the road or the guys on bicycles dressed like court jesters.

Larry wanted to lift the beam over our heads together, one end at a time. He paused and eyed the beam with relish. When we were getting into place he told me about a children's book he read to his girls every night. "It's all about these lumberjacks in the Maine woods, you know?" We stood side by side, bent down together, and on the count of three raised the beam, first to our waist, then to our shoulders. "*Push!* How they used to move logs down the rivers, and how they'd strip them. It's great." Slowly we climbed the ladder with the beam. "*Easy, easy.* Every night I say, 'Okay, what book do you want me to read to you tonight, girls?' And before they can answer, I pull out the lumberjack book—'How about this one, girls?' *Okay, on the count of three, then. You ready? One, two, three!* We got the end just above the top of the wa where it was going to be nailed into place t hold the floor above it. "Drive a couple spikes i it before it kills us," Larry groaned. He wa above me one step on the ladder, with his shou der and his head pressed against the beam. couldn't help him. Finally he looked at me. "Y *got nails?*" he asked.

"I didn't bring any tools," I said. He gave m a curious look and then saw my empty carpe ter's belt. "I thought you just wanted me t bring my belt," I said.

I looked down at it, empty and useless as prop I'd picked up on my way from Centr Casting. It was the sort of moment you hop you can redeem yourself from someday.

"Okay, let's start over," Larry said after he i sued me a tape measure, hammer, two chisels, knife, and a pencil. I filled the leather pouch with nails and wore the belt low on one h like a gunslinger's holster the way the rest the crew wore theirs. At the end of the da rather than hang it up, I kept mine on und my overcoat and walked home. Everyone w having supper when I came into the kitchen. dropped my coat on a chair and unhitched t belt as casually as if I'd been weari it my whole working life.

On my first dump run I told the men w were waiting in line, smoking cigarettes an leaning against their pickups, that I was work ing on the mansion at Prouts Neck.

"It's a huge sucker, ain't it?" said a man wi paint all over his jacket. "I heard from a plumb that the place has got ten bathrooms." H chuckled and rolled a wooden kitchen mat between his teeth. "Well, these ri buggers are full of shit anyway."

For three days I worked with Billy, Larry partner, wrapping the back end of the hou with some polyester material that has replac the more modest tar paper and that felt to n exactly like a pair of bell-bottom pants I on owned. A full roll weighed fifty pounds, a Billy and I worked on two ladders, passing t roll back and forth and leapfrogging each oth as we went along tacking it to the plywo with heavy-duty staplers that made a thunki sound Billy imitated the whole time rath than talk to me. I took his silence to mean th he wasn't sure I was worth the money. I h heard from a guy at the dump that Billy w from out of state and had grown up summeri down the shore near Kennebunk, where I met and married President Bush's daughter.

Billy coached the Scarborough High Scho ice hockey team and had to leave work on F

ay afternoons for practice. Before he climbed own from his ladder, he told me to nail the ıst sheet of plywood in place on the east wall efore I finished up.

I tried three times to climb the ladder with ıe sheet of plywood, but my arms went numb efore I reached the top and I had to drop the ıing and start again. It took me so long that hen I finally made it up the ladder and onto ıe scaffolding, everyone else had gone home nd it was nearly dark. I was about forty feet bove the granite ledges where the waves were reaking hard and throwing a salt spray against ıe house that had iced the plank of wood beeath my feet. When I raised the plywood bove my head a gust yanked it and spun me round. I caught an iron bar of the scaffold ith my left elbow and held on. I was thinking, *How in God's name would Billy or any other real arpenter have done this?* It was a strange moıent. The blood ran out of my arms and there as a pain in my back like a cold spark. Then I egan to feel very calm about letting go of the caffolding. I heard the waves crashing on the ocks, and I felt the wind wash over me and a ghtness fill my lungs. I had the sense that if I just leaned back slightly onto my heels the wind would do the rest.

There were six of us working on the crew, ut the house was so large that we seldom saw ne another. Larry insisted that we all take our fteen-minute coffee break and our half-hour ınch together whenever possible. We were his rew, and he wanted us to appreciate one anther. Once I walked right by a man in my aste to get back to a second-story deck where had been tearing down staging. Larry saw his, and he climbed down from the third story o set me straight. "You can't just walk by peole," he said. "It's going to be a long winter."

We took our breaks in the basement, in a akeshift room stuffed with fiberglass insulaion and covered with clear plastic. Two fourot lengths of electric baseboard heating had een hooked up along the cement floor, as well s a single lightbulb that swung from the ceilng. We stripped off our clothing the second we ntered the room so that we wouldn't sweat and o we'd feel the warmth when we went back ut. Sometimes we sat there as silent as monks, eads bowed, each one of us too cold to speak.

I thought of the place as a locker room, the ind of male sanctuary where we would have een less surprised to hear gunfire than a female oice. In this room I got to know the other ıen, listening carefully while they consulted ne another about whatever problem they faced n the job, drawing pencil diagrams on the cement floor to explain themselves or gathering around the blueprints. These few minutes in the locker room was the only downtime in the crew's ten-hour workday, but each man seemed to know intuitively how enormous the job was and how no time could be wasted if it was going to be completed on schedule.

I was the rookie, and in the locker room I took some ribbing for being a professor. Mostly they teased me about my boots. Riding boots, they called them. "Where'd you leave your horse today, Professor? . . . I bet you need a good pair of high boots like that to teach in."

My boots were the first thing Cal had noticed the day I met him. "You won't survive the winter in boots like that," he said. I was carrying lumber, and he was taking one of his long walks around the neck. We got into it quickly that first day, and after that he told me how he had grown up on his father's farm in Maine and how he had never brushed his teeth in any bathroom except his father's until he went into the army. He fought in the Philippines as an infantryman for two years, and then he worked thirty-five years at the shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and when he retired from that job, he and his wife traveled cross-country on a motorcycle, and then he started another career working summers on the golf course. He was seventy-three now and still working.

One day in the locker room Luke, whose knowledge of construction had earned him the only title in the crew, that of project manager, said to me, "Once you start shingling this place we'll have to scrape the ice off you before you come in for coffee."

I laughed along with them and didn't dare tell them how I was looking forward to that job. After three weeks I had revealed all my inadequacies, and most days now I spent sweeping scrap lumber into piles, loading the piles into trash cans, lugging the trash cans to Larry's truck, and then driving to the dump. No matter how many times Larry told me how good a job I was doing and how important it was to keep the job site clean because it reflected on the company, I knew I was a $15-an-hour trashman who occasionally got to carry lumber or take nails out of boards, and though I was just as cold as anyone else and my clothes were just as dirty, when I came into the locker room for coffee break, I didn't feel like I'd earned it. I always looked at Billy and figured he wasn't speaking to me because he was *building a house* and he hadn't figured out yet what the hell I was doing.

It was like standing outside reading a book in a freezing cold wind, on a busy street with traffic roaring by, reading page after page and trying to

grab hold of the meaning of the pages amid the noise and the cold, but the paragraphs just turn into more paragraphs and no story ever begins. I kept looking for the narrative in my work, something that was moving forward and would add up to a house. Instead, I worked for hours cutting boards I didn't nail into place and stacking lumber in piles that vanished by the end of the



day. I was so far out of the logic of the operation that I didn't realize we were actually building two houses. I had asked Guy, the French-Canadian carpenter, one day about the handsome place under construction at the top of the driveway just off the lane, thinking it was a neighbor's house. It had been framed and sheathed, and it seemed to be finished except for doors, windows, and siding. "*There?*" Guy asked, trying to get over his disbelief. "That's the carriage house. You know, the garage."

The trouble was, whenever I was given a real job, I made mistakes. For four days I worked in the basement blocking the floor joists. The joists were one-by-twelve pieces of lumber that ran the length of the house every fourteen inches, and they had to be held in place by fourteen-inch blocks of wood. I kept cutting them too long or too short.

But the house was being built—the proof was right there in front of my eyes—and I was there every day for ten hours working without stopping in order to finish the jobs Larry assigned to me. Yet I was waiting for the kind of purpose and satisfaction I imagined the Italian masons took home each night. There were three of them, and I loved watching them build the stone wall that was covering the foundation. They arrived each morning in one truck with the youngest man behind the wheel. The old man got out first and walked straight to the large pile of stones, where he stood for a while by himself until the other two men came up behind him. Then, as if he had been dreaming the stones into their shapes in his sleep, he peered down at the pile and pointed slowly to those he believed would fit together to make the section of the wall they were going to work on that day. In the first strokes of sunlight I saw their St. Christopher medallions glistening as the men leaned over their trowels.

I had no idea why the excavation crew had dug the enormous hole, six feet deep and eight feet wide, that ran the entire eighty feet of the foundation wall along the front of the house. But every night the hole filled with water from the swamp, and one of my jobs was to go down into the hole and turn on the pump as soon as I got to work. One morning I slid down one bank, broke through the ice, and landed in water up to my neck. I started the pump and then headed home for some dry clothes, cutting through the golf course so that I wouldn't be seen by the rest of the crew coming to work. I had just walked across a green when someone yelled at me: "This is a private golf course!" I couldn't believe anyone was playing golf in the middle of December, and when I turned I saw a big, broad-shouldered woman glaring at me. I was thinking maybe I would tell her that I was a professor of literature on sabbatical. "You walked right across the green," she said.

"I'm sorry," I told her.

"You're not one of those workers building that dreadful house, are you?"

My whole life I'd feared women like this one, suspecting them to be the people behind the scenes deciding how the world should work.

"No," I told her. "I'm an astronaut. I'm on vacation with my family. We're renting a place across the road."

She seemed relieved, and I felt grateful and asked her how the fairways were playing.

"The course is in awful shape," she said. "You know I was playing golf in Turkey two weeks ago—have you ever been to Turkey?"

I almost said, *Only once*. "Turkey? No."

"The fairways are so lush that the ball boy go barefoot so they can find your ball."

For three days I had a good job building temporary windows and doors we needed until the custom-made windows and doors arrived from Minnesota. When I nailed the last one in place, the house was closed in, and this meant we could begin running propane heaters. That

ight I fell asleep thinking about working the ext day where it was warm.

When I arrived Larry was already there, stand- ng in the hole along the front of the house. He ad blueprints spread out on the ground above is head, and he had hooked up two pumps, one lectric and one with a gas motor that made it ard to hear what he was saying.

He climbed out of the hole, we knelt down n the frozen dirt, and I tried to follow him as e explained how we were going to build con- rete footings the entire length of the hole and nen a perimeter retaining wall on top of the ootings. He traced his finger along the blue- rint. "You can follow it here," he said. "It goes n for twenty-two feet, then it cuts out six feet o grab the front of the porch, then it winds ack. See?"

I said I did.

"Let's get going," he said, rolling up the lueprints. "Five days and we'll have it done."

We got right into it. Luke lined up the ce- ent truck for two o'clock that afternoon, and nen he put on his boots and got down in the ole with Larry and me. We measured for the orms, cut the wood and built them right in the ole, and then we surveyed them to make sure hey were level. All the while the pumps were ucking out the water that ran in from the arsh. It was mostly pick-and-shovel work, nd we got soaked and the water froze our lothing. We worked against the clock, cutting he steel rods to reinforce the concrete and lay- ng them in grids in the mud on the bed of the orms. The first day everything went smoothly. was fastening the last pieces of steel when the ement truck pulled in at the top of the drive- vay. We stood in the hole, pushing the cement hrough the forms with our shovels while it ran own the shute. Then we smoothed out the urface and climbed out of the hole just as it vas getting dark.

The next morning we started in again, only his time I was left on my own while Larry and uke had a breakfast meeting with the archi- ects. It was my first real chance, and I studied he blueprints before I began building the orms. Right from the start, though, nothing ooked right. I built one form and then ripped t apart and started again. Then a third time. The blueprints fell into the water and were un- eadable, and I began to think maybe that vould be my excuse. By noon, when Larry and uke returned, there wasn't enough time left to inish before the cement arrived. "I'll call and ry and stop the truck," Luke said.

Larry jumped down into the hole. "Let them ome," he yelled above the pump.

For a while I tried to keep up with him and e of some help. But then I just stood there. I remembered a moment at the university when pipes had burst in one wall in the conference room of the English department. It was an ancient granite wall, and all through the afternoon the room was filled with workmen tearing the place apart with jackhammers and chisels, trying to get to the pipe. Water was running down the hallway, and as a precaution all the utilities had been shut off in the building. The room was dark, and the men were shouting and gesturing to one another while the water gushed through the ceiling. It was like a scene from a catastrophe film, maybe a submarine sinking, and I was standing there watching when one of the professors from the Classics department wandered in with a batch of term papers in one hand and said very loudly, "Excuse me, but there's a terrible chill in my office and I wonder what the prospects are that heat will be restored this afternoon?" All of a sudden the workmen stopped and turned and stared at him with that universal and timeless expression that men who work hard reserve for men who do not.

The next day Larry let me cut the steel myself. "Just read the prints carefully," he said. I did, but I still cut twenty pieces two inches short. "Do them again," he said.

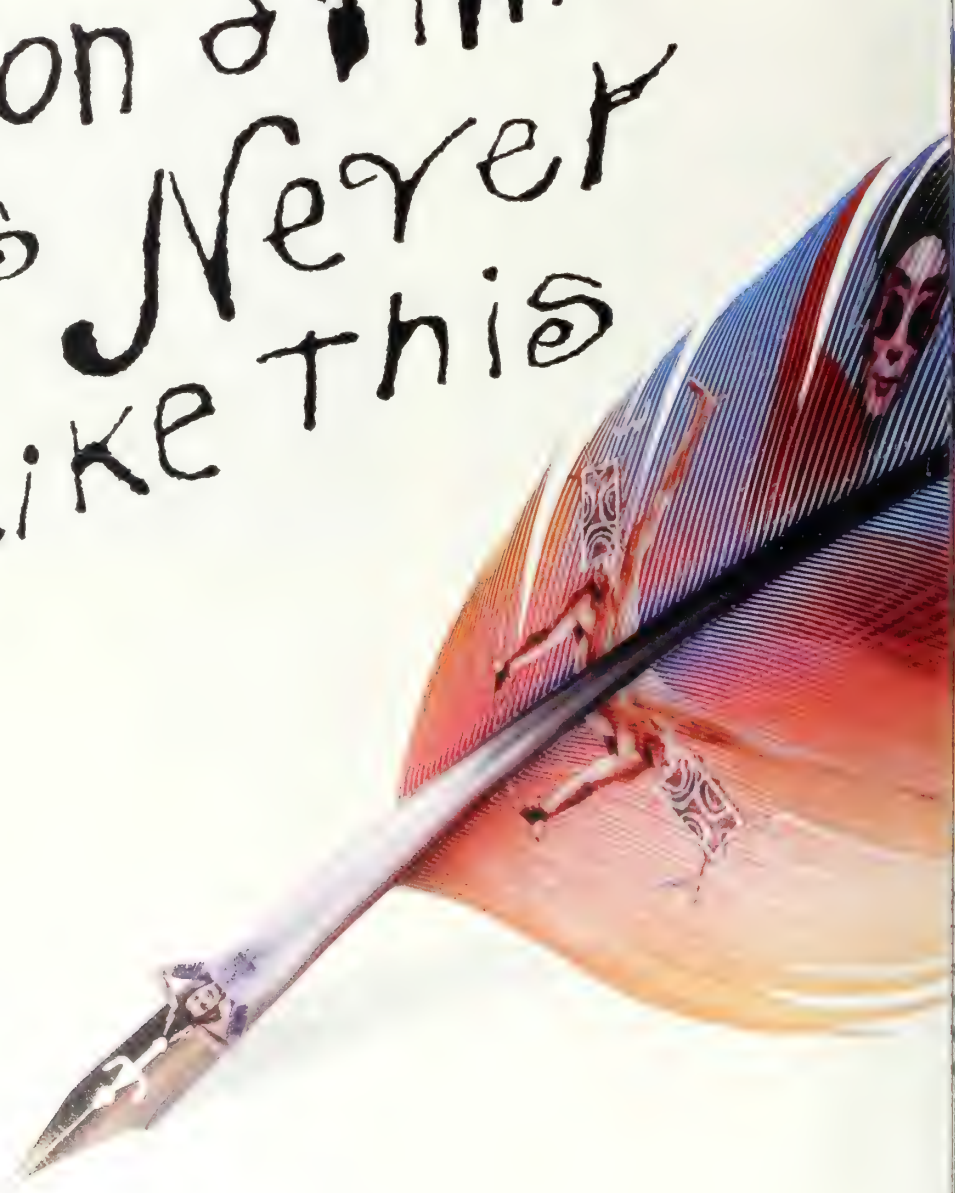
At fifteen below zero, each time we bent over in the icy water it felt like my bones were grinding in their sockets. At one point I had to climb out of the hole to piss. I walked around to the back of the house, and when I took out my penis it was covered in wet blood the color of raspberries. I bent over and looked through the open fly. There was blood everywhere. It had soaked my long underwear and my boxer shorts and was half frozen, thick and sticky like jam. It scared me, and I began jumping out of my clothes until I found where a blood vessel had broken.

I WORKED FOR HOURS CUTTING BOARDS I DIDN'T NAIL AND STACKING LUMBER IN PILES THAT VANISHED

I had been back in the hole just a few minutes when I looked up and saw a woman standing there smiling at me. "Will you give me a grand tour?" she asked, pleasantly. At first I thought I hadn't heard her correctly. I knew she was a Prouts Neck woman because she had one of those highly bred collies with sawed-off legs. "I've known Larry since he was a boy," she said, just as pleasantly. "He won't mind if you give me the cook's tour."

As soon as I showed her inside, her mood changed. "You could build places like this at the turn of the century," she snarled at me. "But today they just scream one word: *pretentious!*

ONCE
upon a time
was Never
like this



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Not so far away (though very far out) there exists a place called BAM. Where fairy tales don't come true. They come to life. But beware! For you might not recognize these characters from the dusty pages of childhood, but you will never forget them. Listen as the raspy-voiced minstrel, Tom Waits, takes "Alice in Wonderland" to places she's never been. And it's no tea party. Visit other distant worlds in "The Passion of Joan of Arc," "Salome" and "The Duchess of Malfi" by entering this enchanted land. And before you know it you'll be able to say (and here's the storybook ending): "Once upon a time I went to BAM."

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Look at that London stairway," she exclaimed.

I thought I heard her dog growl at me on the way out.

The house was a curiosity, and when the owners of the summer houses returned for long weekends they often wandered by. "Excuse me," Larry called from the roof when two women emerged from the house. "Who are you?"

I'D BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE A SLOT FOR ME NEAR THE TOP, A LONG WAY FROM GUYS WITH MUD ON THEIR FACES

They told him that a certain man from Prouts Neck, one of the largest landowners, had given them permission to take a tour. A few minutes later this man appeared, dressed in a brand-new camouflage jumpsuit.

"Hey," Larry called, "I'm trying to run a business here. I don't go walking around your office, do I?"

"I'm so sorry," he said unctuously. "The last thing I want to do is upset you. What tool is that you're using there?"

"A hammer," Larry called back.

One day I moved boulders in a sleet storm. There were nearly a hundred of them and they were too heavy to lift, so I had to stay down on my knees the whole day pushing them an inch or two at a time. When I got home there was another rejection letter from a college I'd applied to for work.

The subcontractors arrived one morning and began unloading the forms we needed to start the retaining wall. The foreman was a goofy-looking guy who stood in one place eating doughnuts while he yelled orders at his crew. I figured he was the son who had inherited the business. It was barely above zero and the wind was vicious, and he kept telling his men to set things down one place and then changing his mind and telling them to move them someplace else.

He was back again the next morning, shouting more orders. The electric pump had gone off for some reason, and I was down on my knees in the water checking to see if it was clogged. I unplugged it and was about to plug it in again when he yelled at me: "Somebody got electrocuted doing the same thing last week. You better smarten up."

I turned and looked at him. All four of his workers had stopped and were looking at him too. And then they turned to me. It was just a moment, but it was worth something to me for some reason. I raised the electric cord so he could see it. I held up the plug from the pump so he could see that too. Then I plugged it in and held it in my hands until he turned away.

At dinner I tried to explain to Colleen. "I guess I just wanted to shut him up," I said.

"Well, that was pretty stupid," she said.

I went outside into the garage with two more rejection letters. So far there were thirty-seven of them, and I had begun tacking them to the wall above some beach chairs and the kids' plastic swimming pool.

The next day when I got to work Cal was standing there holding a paper bag. "How you doing?" he asked.

"Digging ditches," I said.

"You'll be strong by spring," he said, handing me the bag. It was a beautiful pair of work boots. Leather with felt liners.

"I can't take them," I said.

"You have to," he said.

It was the premium due on the car insurance that broke us the next week. We sent the check off on the last possible day and then had nothing left for groceries. Two days later, the day our son Jack turned six, our first food stamps arrived in the mail. We were going to have a nice birthday dinner, and I went to the Shop 'n Save with our seven-year-old daughter, Nell, to get a few things. There was a young man in a beautiful camel's-hair overcoat standing behind us in the checkout aisle. The woman on his arm was wearing a cocktail dress slit up one thigh. As soon as I started to pay for the shrimp with food stamps, I heard the man groan. I was nervous, afraid the cashier might ask me for some kind of identification that I didn't have. I don't know what the man said to the woman, but when she sighed, I told myself to hit him first and say whatever came to mind later. Instead, I turned and faced them. "Nell," I said to my daughter, "you know why this man is groaning? If we were buying boxes of macaroni and cheese with our food stamps it would be all right with him. But he's groaning because we're buying the kind of food he eats." He turned and walked toward the next aisle. The woman looked back at me with disgust.

I was thinking about that when I climbed the ladder the next day to paint a coat of primer on the trim at the roof line. It was a long way up, fifty or sixty feet. I was holding on with one hand, carrying a gallon of paint in the other, and thinking about how angry I was. I was angry because I didn't have any skills and because I was being paid good money and wasn't earning it. And because I'd always believed there would be a slot for me somewhere near the top, a long way from guys with mud on their faces who couldn't earn a living. At the top of the ladder I stepped onto the plan

hat hung from wall brackets just below the oof. I started painting, inching my way along he plank and telling myself that there were o many people waiting at every good slot toay, the competition was maddening. Somehow when I took a half step back I missed the lank. I felt my heel in the air, and a cold nptiness suddenly rushed through me. I stood here thinking how nice it would be to just rop down to my knees slowly and then to lay at on the plank and wrap my arms around it.

It was Rob, another carpenter, who came outside and talked to me until I finally climbed down.

Just before Christmas I was telling an old iend about my last day in the hole. Somehow it had fallen to me to prepare the section f earth where the main sewer pipe ran out om the basement wall of the house and hrough the hole before it was filled in with x feet of gravel and concrete. Everyone else ad gone on to do other things, so I cut me shims of wood to place under the ipe so that it ran downhill slightly, way from the house. Then I covered he pipe with straw. It took maybe wenty minutes, but it hit me that I had, n my hands, the one job that could sabtage a rich man's house. All I had to do as turn the little shims so that the pipe an back toward the house. My little seret would have been buried beneath ravel and concrete, and no one would ave found out until the toilets had een flushed about forty times and the tuff started backing up toward the walls f the house. "I almost turned it backards," I said to my friend. "I don't now why. I think I just wanted to take omething."

He listened patiently, a good-hearted, ardworking lawyer who had already paid ff the mortgage on his house and set side enough money for his three kids' ollege education. He told me how glad he was hat I'd found work.

"It doesn't matter what kind of work we do," e said. "All work has value."

I told him he was full of shit. "My grandfaher never finished eighth grade," I said. "He vas a laborer all his life, but he could live on his low wages. Today he'd be a beggar."

My friend let me go on and on.

After New Year's we heard that the owner f the house was arriving in two days. My job vas to clean not just the place again but all the roperty that surrounded it.

I wanted everything to be perfect. I climbed the owner's tree to get a plastic sandwich bag that had blown into the branches. I crawled through the thickets of the marsh and got one of my boots sucked off trying to reach a Styrofoam coffee cup.

I didn't see the owner arrive. I was in the basement painting trim boards for Luke. I had one bare foot propped up on a roll of insulation next to a propane heater, trying to thaw it out, when two women appeared in fur coats and a cloud of perfume. "Have you got anything warm to drink?" I heard one of them ask. The other woman was carrying a Gucci bag stuffed with material samples. "If you put fiberglass showers in the bathrooms, the whole house will be ruined," she exclaimed.

At the end of the second week of January the shingles arrived. Hundreds of boxes of cedar shingles that I stacked in the garage, thinking of all the work and of the weeks and weeks of paychecks they represented.



Larry started me on the back of the carriage house, the one place that would never be seen. He showed me how he wanted it done, how to run a chalk line and then nail a board along the line to use as a guide, setting each shingle on the edge of the board and moving along, one at a time. Right from the first shingle, I loved the order and the slow momentum of it and how it steadily amounted to something that looked finished. I loved the solid sound of the hammer in the cold air.

But I was terribly slow. Part of my trouble was the brutal cold. It was below zero when I began each morning and barely above through most of the day. I dropped five nails for every

one I managed to get into place, and some days there would still be three hours left to go when I'd look at my watch and think I couldn't take the cold another fifteen minutes.

Working up the gabled end of the carriage house was even slower, because I had to cut the shingles at the ends of each row to follow the slant of the roof and to fit tightly against the trim that had already been nailed on. I used a knife to cut them and a block plane to finish them. By eleven o'clock one morning, all the subcontractors had gone home and we were waiting to get hit by the first big storm of the winter. The ocean was buried beneath sea smoke, the temperature with the wind chill was thirty-seven below. I was high up on a ladder putting the last few shingles in the peak of the gabled end when Larry came around the corner. I saw him standing there. It had just begun to snow. He took the hammer out of his belt, and I watched him use the claws to pry up the piece of trim at the end of my rows.

I NOW SAW THE MEN AT THE DUMP AS SURVIVORS OF SOME KIND OF NIGHT JOURNEY THROUGH AMERICA

"I cut them all along the angle," I said hopefully.

"Yeah," he said, "but I wanted them to slide under the trim. You see, like this? That's the only way to make it watertight."

He started peeling off the shingles with the hammer. It made a horrible noise, the creaking nails and the ripping sound as the shingles snapped and split into pieces that fell into the snow. "You'll have to start over on this end," he said. "Don't worry about it."

I went back on Saturday, when I hoped no one would be there to see, or hear, me ripping off all those shingles.

Monday I came into the locker room for lunch, and I heard Billy saying something to Larry about the labor costs. They stopped talking as soon as I came in, but for the rest of the day I felt it coming, and when Larry told me he was going to lay me off because the doors and windows were late and they had to go in before we could really shingle the place, I didn't believe him.

I stayed in bed for four days, feeling sorry about everything. My son kept coming to my room, standing outside the locked door, tapping it with his fingertips. "It's me. Jack," he would say. Each time I heard him outside my door I had the same feeling I'd had at the supermarket, as if I was standing away from myself.

Every morning when my family was asleep I looked down the shore at the house to make sure that the doors and windows weren't in and that no shingles had gone on. Then I went back to bed. "That's the difference between fathers and mothers," Colleen said. "A mother can't just give up and stay in bed."

It came down to needing one day's work to put together enough money for our February rent, and when I called Larry to ask him if he needed me to do anything, he told me to come in the next morning. I got dressed, then stopped to say good-bye to Colleen. "Wipe off your lips," she said. "You've got Maalox on them."

I spent the whole ten hours on my knees, picking up every stick of wood inside and outside the house and the carriage house. I was picking up wood shavings and telling myself that all work had dignity if it paid you enough to make your rent. The guy driving the bulldozer jumped down and came up to me. "That guy who used to stop here?" he said. "Cal?"

"Yeah?"

"He died," he said. "I guess he was full of cancer."

By now I knew the men waiting in line at the dump: the one with the handlebar mustache, the one with the Playboy bunny hanging from his rearview mirror, the ones who did cocaine drops on the weekend because they couldn't pay their bills on eight bucks an hour. They were killing time, smoking and talking, and I stayed with them a little while and began picturing them as the boys I had walked past on autumn afternoons toward dusk when I was seventeen and headed toward a full college scholarship for playing football and then a fellowship for graduate school. On those afternoons we always came out of the football locker room into the cold light and crossed the parking lot in our spiked shoes like a small army, helmets on or cocked under our arms. On our way to the practice field we passed the hoods sitting on the steps out behind the wood shop, hunched over their cigarettes, watching us with bored, superior expressions. Though I never spoke with any of them, their names still were real to me almost thirty years later: Percy Sergeant. Wayne Lavasseur. Paul Gaudette. They had nothing but disdain for us in our uniforms, taking orders, believing things that they already knew were not true. I looked down on them with their go-to-hell sunglasses and their shit-kicker boots. But there at the dump, I now saw them as survivors of some kind of night journey that I had never believed was out there for me. Watching them, I saw how desperately I had always wanted to dance with America and how I always wanted to believe that I could hear the band starting up in the distance for me, and how those boys

utside the wood shop had already taken merica by the hand and disappeared with her wn Flamingo Lane. We had all come of age the midst of a magician's trick when he uld still pull the rabbit out of the hat, and tely, of course, he had slowed down a bit, d you could see the little trap doors and nges in his act and in my own act as well. aybe this was why disillusionment was reading into the middle class, not because sillusionment was rising but because the iddle class was falling.

It was snowing when I walked home. I took e long way, hoping the kids would be asleep nen I came in, but the three oldest ones were ght there telling me that they had driven by ith mommy and seen me at work. "What were you doing crawling in the woods?" Erin asked.

Larry called me back to work the day the ndows and doors arrived. We had to get all ne hundred and seven of them in in advance a northeaster that was blowing up the coast d due to dump heavy snow. The sky was ack when I walked down the shore. Out at a there were ships heading in to the cove, eir running lights like low-hanging stars. We orked without a break, and I was on the uth end of the house when the Italians fin-ed the chimney just as the snow began to ow across the marsh. It was a beautiful stone imney, and they stood there for a moment oking up at it, blocking the snow out of their es. I told the old man that it was something, d I stood there next to him, waiting for him mark the moment in some way. He took ne last look and said, "There it is." Then he rned and picked up his lunch box and alked to his truck.

Eleven hours after we arrived that morning e finished the last window. Larry had cut his ce on a nail, and there was dried blood on his eek. He was happy. "Let it snow," he said. Another month and this place will be close. eal close."

My last job that day was to climb up onto all ne scaffolding and turn the planks on their lges so that they wouldn't get buried under ne snow, and then to bring all the ladders own off the sides of the house. I got all but ne plank. It was fifty feet above my head, and could barely see it in the blowing snow.

The waves were breaking over the sea wall hen I began walking home. I was sure the ind was blowing better than sixty miles an our. It took me almost an hour to walk home. olleen had taken the kids to her mother's, d I got a fire going and then fell asleep in a air and dreamed about the snow piling up on that last plank that I hadn't moved. The weight of the snow would snap the plank in half, and both pieces would go sailing through the beautiful triple windows.

I put all my clothes on and started back down the beach.

Overnight the storm passed, and I was the first one at work in the morning. The living room—a ninety-six-foot-long great hall with three Rumford fireplaces, wide triple windows, and seventeen doors, each eight feet tall, with twelve one-foot-square panes of glass—was drenched in sunlight. It was more than just the light; the windows and doors made it seem like music had been turned on in the house, and I found myself walking from one window to the next, just looking at the view and imagining people living in this light, pulling a chair up to one window early some morning to watch the ships at sea.

In the last days, Larry put me on the front of the main house, the first part of the house the owner would see when he returned, and I worked at it until the weather got warm, wanting it to be perfect for him and for reasons that had nothing to do with things I'd thought much about before. The last time I climbed down the scaffolding and looked up, the house was bathed in moonlight.

Larry came up behind me. "It's amazing," he said. "Someone draws a picture of a place, and then suddenly there it is, exactly like the picture." He had lived with this place for almost a year, always unwhole, broken into small pieces. He had made a hundred decisions a day about the pieces, and lay awake at night wondering if he'd made the right decisions and if he'd overlooked something. But standing there, looking back at the house, it was whole; all the pieces had come together.

If I had known Larry better I would have admitted that throughout the winter I had resented the man who owned this house. Though I knew nothing about him, I had thought of him as a luckier man than I was, a man with proof that his life was adding up to something. But maybe he wasn't lucky at all, or even if he *had* been handed everything, still, somewhere along the line, he must have risked something or worked hard or made the right decision or just kept his mouth shut, so that tomorrow he wasn't going to have to start looking again for a job. We said good-bye. Larry was hurrying to finish a toy stove he was building for a daughter's birthday party. I thanked him for the work. "Hey," he said, shaking my hand, "thanks for all your help." ■

OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

With Bob Dole, Newt Gingrich, and Phil Gramm, at the feet of Ross Perot

By David Samuels

SURLY SONGS OF LOVE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 10:45 A.M.

Beneath the concrete dome of the Dallas Convention Center, little old ladies in tennis shoes sit patiently next to their husbands, goldbugs, third-party hopefuls, and even stranger breeds of the Great Discontented who have each paid $135 "to be a part of history," under the auspices of United We Stand America and its billionaire leader, Ross Perot. The thirty-six speeches they will hear, over the next three days, from Democrats and Republicans, experts on Social Security, Medicare, and the deficit, will be devoted, say the handbills, to "preparing our country for the 21st Century." If the three thousand souls in the hall are less than half of those expected, they are, nonetheless, all "angry," the wrath of the American voter having assumed mythic proportions in the media. And here they are, the angry voters, in the flesh, lighting up the aisles in a rainbow of reds, blues, and yellows, of polyester K-Mart specials, waiting for the curtain to go up.



Seated on the red-carpeted camera risers next to the stage, the press is eager to experience the anger firsthand, to calibrate its move[ments] and qualities. With their Hugh Gran[t] haircuts and Ann Taylor dresses, sleek micro[cassette] recorders, computer cases with Velcr[o] handles, bottles of spring wa[ter], the contrast between th[e] reporters and the reporte[d] could not be any clearer if yo[u] laid it out on one of Ross Pe[rot]'s famous charts.

The band strikes up a tun[e] and a blonde singer clasps he[r] hands to her heart, proclaim[ing] the anthem of this place, the Emerald City of the inde[pendent] voters. It is an ar[ia] them unfamiliar to the pre[ss] and, it seems, to the voter[s]. they gaze tolerantly back at th[e] stage as two ladies in blu[e] silently flutter the signs for th[e] deaf, informing them of th[e] seas through which we must sail. Turning t[o] my neighbor for guidance, I am startled to fi[nd] myself in the presence of the Wizard himse[lf], tiny, crew-cut, surly, and glaring. I turn awa[y], but with the definite feeling that something [is] wrong. The singer's lips move up and down, *b[ut] there are no words coming out of her mouth.*

"What the hell is this?" I wonder aloud, ar[ound] for a split second Perot seems not to hea[r]. Then the furrowed brow, the stick-out ears-

David Samuels is a writer living in New York City. His last piece for Harper's Magazine, *"At Play in the Fields of O[ppression]," appeared in the May issue.*

Photograph by Bob Daemmrich/Sva

e face that launched a thousand Sunday-
orning cartoons—come together in a terrific
owl. "Oh God," he mutters, and bounds be-
nd the wings. Switches are thrown, and sud-
nly the singer's voice fills the hall. Beside me
the dark, a stoop-shouldered old reporter
uckles. "He'll make her do it over," he whis-
rs. The singer returns and she takes it again
om the top.

Ross Perot bounds onto the stage.
et me tell you a little bit about this
ung lady," he begins, his voice like a
bber band shot through the arena.
The doctors told her parents there
as no way they could have a child.
hey prayed; they had this lovely
ung lady. Obviously, she is their
arl. . . . And I want everybody in
merica to understand—this young la-
y has never had a voice lesson. Isn't
at incredible . . . ? So as we face and
apple with the problems we have to
lve . . ."

"Grapple, Ross, grapple," the old re-
orter urges him on. Gottlieb, as I will
ll him, has been reporting on the il-
sions and disillusion of our political
fe longer than Michael Kinsley and
Maureen Dowd combined—as long, at
east, as David Brinkley. He stands be-
de me in the dark, his seersucker suit
opelessly rumpled, a sad-eyed Virgil
f the campaign trails, my fated guide
o the events that will follow.

"Major Richard Meadows is a man who actu-
lly lived the role that James Bond portrays in
he movies," Perot announces, dedicating this
vent to the commando who flew 350 miles in
helicopter across Vietnam to liberate the
rison at Son Tay. "Unfortunately," Perot con-
nues, "the Vietnamese had emptied the prison
amp, but the raid was a textbook success. . . .
That was Dick Meadows's signature—do the im-
ossible, have no casualties." As the audience
magines those anxious seconds—the choppers
ouching down, the silence of the empty
rison—the moral becomes clear: every success
ontains a gritty core of failure. This is a lesson
he audience knows well. They have lived it all
heir lives, and it is Perot's particular genius that
lespite his billions, his private jets, and his vast
orporate holdings, he knows it, too.

David Boren of Oklahoma, who retired from
he U.S. Senate a year ago, stands up next to
leliver the keynote address, which touches
gravely on familiar issues, and in which he dis-
plays a talent for reciting from the polls. Asked
whether "you usually trust your government to
lo what is right," three fourths of Americans
nswer "no." In 1964, three quarters answered
"yes." The audience, of the majority, listens, expectant, while the reporters busily write these statistics down. They, like Boren, believe that the polls will tell us why we are here.

"How many of you think this was one of the greatest speeches you ever heard?" Ross Perot demands, excited by the promise these numbers hold out. On the whim of a billionaire they profess to scorn, the political elite of the nation

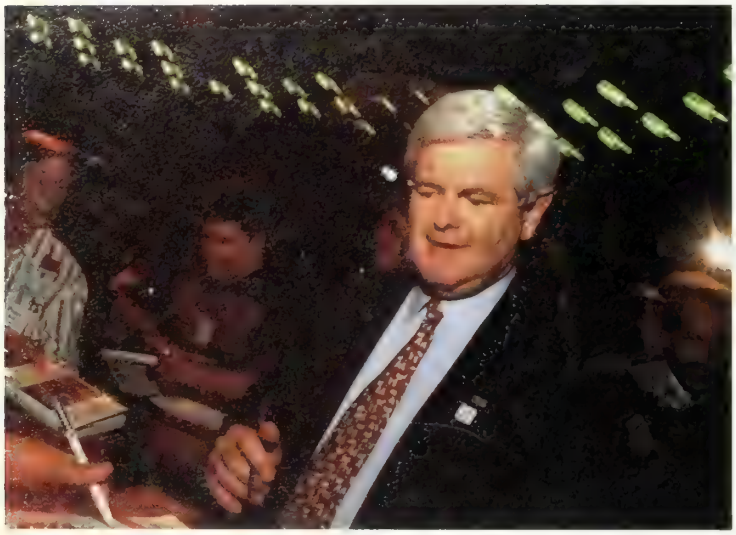


has come to Dallas to do their obeisance. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Representatives Dick Armey and John Kasich, Democratic Minority Leaders Richard Gephardt of the House and Tom Daschle of the Senate, Senators Paul Simon and Chris Dodd, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. All nine of the Republican presidential candidates are here: Senators Bob Dole and Phil Gramm, Governor Pete Wilson, Pat Buchanan, Senators Arlen Specter and Richard Lugar, Congressman Bob Dornan, black radio talk-show host Alan Keyes, and Maurice Taylor, a businessman from Iowa. The actual President of the United States is absent, but he has sent his boyhood friend from Hope, Mack McLarty, to assure us all of Bill Clinton's interest and continuing significance in our political life. They have come in search of the votes Perot can provide.

And with them, seven hundred and fifty members of the press, from ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, whose opinion of Ross Perot might be summed up by last week's reference in *Newsweek*: "a borderline lunatic." The politicians have come for the press, and the press has

hotograph by Mark Peterson/Saba Press Photos

come for the politicians. They will file their stories and present what happens here as news; that is, as a familiar moment in our conventional political narrative, along with primaries and the State of the Union Address. The stories they write will be free of moral judgment; they will read like a handicapper's sheet: win, place, and show, the furlongs run and stakes won or lost. They will be professionally written and en-



livened by dashes of color—telling quotes, deadpan verbs—to reward those who make it past the fifth paragraph. And they will fail to convey any sense whatsoever of the hallucinatory spectacle unfolding before us.

SKEE-REET! HERE COMES THE PRESS

FRIDAY, 12:30 P.M.

In the press room, less than fifty yards from the arena floor, reporters are tapping away at Powerbooks and IBMs, Compaqs, ASTs, all the latest models, some so small you could slip them into your pocket and walk away (as, later this day, some opportunistic visitor does). The press room is filled with the purposeful energy of children taking a test in school, and every few minutes a hand goes up to summon a Perot staffer with a yellow badge and walkie-talkie. And ten minutes later, like magic, the Illinois or New York chairman of United We Stand America will sit down by the reporter's side to say something, anything, to fill out the limping fifth paragraph of the afternoon's story. As first drafts speed their way to editors in Los Angeles and New York, the press room will fill with the otherworldly hiss and crackle of computers, talking to each other across the void.

The audience for what transpires onstage is not in the Convention Center, of course, bu in here, where the speakers have been shrun to tiny, six-inch-high creatures who gestur and proclaim from ten big-screen color TV The people in the arena are visible here on during reaction shots, in which they resemb the studio audience of *Roseanne*.

The politicians speak not to them but to th press, and to the abstract voters seated in fro of their televisions; the speeches they delive are the culminations of focus groups and poll transformed into packets of electronic particl and sent pulsating through the ether.

Shot against a backdrop of moderate blu the proceedings inside the Convention Cent look as normal as scenes from the evening news, on which, at this moment, crew men bers labor mightily. As the speakers march t the podium in linear fashion, time in the roo becomes ever more fluid; behind the pre room curtains, where technicians labor in th service of Oz, tiny snippets of the Wizard ar being wound and rewound and frozen in th never-ending search for the perfect sound bit to violent howls of protest from the tape:

"These are people who work—"

SKEE-REET!

"... who love this great—"

SKEEE-REEEEET!

"... into the twenty-first—"

SKREEEEEEEEEEEET!

The high-flown ruminations made on th next American century, on Social Security an Medicare—it is impossible to speak of the me its or failings of the proposals made here in Da las. They are all the same: plots and subplot with no independent existence outside th script, whose ebullient, six-inch-tall autho speaks to us from the screens above our heads:

"Every time he sees me, he calls me brothe ..."

Gottlieb looks up. "You don't want to mis this," he instructs, and I dash the fifty yard past metal detectors and concession stands, i time to see Ross Perot deliver his final flourish worthy of an emcee for the Temptations:

"It is my privilege to introduce the Reveren Jesse Jackson," he announces, arms sprea wide. "He will light up the room!"

Jackson's part in the unfolding drama is tha of the showstopping orator whose spotligh number is not to be missed. He begins with promising reference to the "one party with tw names or two with one assumption," yet it is a off day. Reading haltingly from his text, the or atorial Mr. Magic drifts in and out of a synta that buries his argument beneath a layer c thick verbal sludge: "They think a lower ceil ing for women and deeper holes to black an browns with closed doors will go away wit

Photograph by Nina Berman/Sipa Pre

ıe rather than a plan of inclusion," he urges,
protests—it is difficult to say exactly.
hat's half a thought. That is not a complete
ought," he explains. Even his trademark
ymes don't scan. "They say they are under-
king your *work*," he stresses, "but take a clos-
look." Open-minded, or unfamiliar with his
utine, the audience gives him a stirring
ınd of applause.

In the meantime, Perot has discovered an-
ıer line, which he will repeat, over and
er, until the conference ends on Sunday
ght. "I know you are thinking, 'How are we
ing to get all these great speeches?' " he be-
ıs. His voice sounds different this time, an
enoidal plea that brings a smile to the face
every member of his audience. "Well, here's
e number: 1-800-925-4000." He says it
ain: "1-800-925-4000." He is the late-night
-chman, hawking juicers, blenders, and exer-
e belts to his tossing, turning fans. The hint
vulgarity here, which registers clearly on the
ces of the press—*Jesus Christ, can you believe*
s?—is intentional, the intention being to
ite the billionaire and his audience in the
ared sensibility of infomercials, of the blurry
les of McDonald's and Denny's they have
ıveled to get here. Freed from the necessary
mpromises of political life, Perot can con-
ct in a way that the party politicians cannot.
ou know, he is one of our greatest speakers,"
rot proclaims, his arm around the smiling
sse Jackson, an interracial photo op for the
ınt pages tomorrow, "but as a child he was
ry shy."

No longer shy, Jackson glides serenely
rough the anxious crush of cameras and
corders in the press room. He has perfected
e politician's shuffle, the art of standing in
ace and answering, then taking four or five
ıick steps forward to allow reporters farther
ck in the crowd to turn him into news:

"Are you gonna run as a third-party candi-
te for president?"

"I'm exploring all possibilities and all op-
ons."

"In your column in the paper today you
lled this a 'panderama' . . ."

"I did call it a panderama," Jackson answers
ıoothly, "because there are a lot of people
re pandering." Spotting Gottlieb's familiar
ad in the crowd, Jackson breaks from the
ck to pay him a visit: it is a favor that Gott-
b, hovering anxiously over his laptop on
adline, is not particularly eager to receive.
low ya doin'?" Jackson asks. "Not bad, not
d," Gottlieb shrugs, "I can say he's running
r president, right?" he asks the other reporters,
rning back to the paragraph on screen. The
ory is due in twenty minutes.

WHADDAYAHSAY!

FRIDAY, 7:00 P.M.

The audience has now settled in, attending politely to speech after speech. Flurries of applause alternate with the silence of people who have nowhere else to go but the concession stands, for hot dogs or frozen yogurt. They take notes in the United We Stand participant response booklets provided for them as they enter the Convention Center each day. Through these, their thoughts and feelings will be conveyed to Ross Perot: "I agreed with the following ideas presented in the speech"; "Ideas presented about which I want or need more information"; "I disagreed with the following ideas presented in the speech." The results of the profile sheets will provide Perot with information on attendees' age, sex, income, education level, and party affiliation, to assist him in the important decisions to come.

THE HINT OF VULGARITY UNITES THE BILLIONAIRE AND HIS AUDIENCE IN THE SHARED SENSIBILITY OF INFOMERCIALS

"I think we are in as grave a danger as the Roman republic was in after the Punic Wars," proclaims Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House and, as he has just reminded us, a professor of history. The thought of the Punic Wars seems to please him. He smiles, and for a moment it seems he will go off on this tangent: the history and cultural attainments of Rome, from the pages of Time-Life Books, with their seventy-two color illustrations of the Forum, of the Imperial Legions arrayed against Carthage; democracy is in peril, and only he, Newt Gingrich, agent of timeless historical forces, can save us.

He speaks with the confidence of a man who can stand at the podium—today, tomorrow, and for the foreseeable future—and say anything he wants. He is pleased to be here. He is pleased to be Newt Gingrich, and the pleasures of inhabiting that state, at this particular moment, are enough to make any man glad. "This is America," he sings, a cross between Walt Whitman and Norman Vincent Peale. "There's always a future. You can do better. You never stop—you go. Vision, what's your vision of the future?" he crows. "What kind of country do you want?" When it comes to policy matters he is equally at ease; he is a sleek, muscular seal at the zoo, tossing the bright red Republican beach balls—welfare reform, term limits—up into the air with careless flicks of his nose.

"WHADDAYAHSAY!" Ross Perot is beside himself with pleasure, raising Gingrich's hand above his head in a joint declaration of victory, ready-made for the morning papers in Atlanta.

"If I live to be as old as Noah," he promises, "and I intend to—and the Bible says that Noah lived for four hundred years—I will never forget this great event." However long he lives, the funny-looking man on the stage got nineteen million votes in the last election, and with all those angry voters, the discontent in the polls—*Are you generally satisfied with the way politics in America is currently conducted?*—who is to say what the people want? Ross Perot says that he knows, and with nineteen million votes, the lights and the cameras, and tomorrow's deadlines already looming, it is easy enough for the press to believe him.

PEROT'S SUPPORTERS PREFER TO OVERLOOK WHY THEIR LEADER SO ABRUPTLY WITHDREW FROM THE RACE IN 1992

"He grew up in very modest circumstances," Perot begins, his brassy, drumroll patter announcing the arrival of Richard Gephardt, the golden-haired tribune of the Democratic Party. "But he had great parents. . . . So all you young people out there in modest circumstances . . ."

Watching Gephardt do his thing onstage is like watching a tape of Gingrich played back at half-speed. He is a slower, less agile version of the standard-issue, blow-dried model. The rackety machinery of the political mind is all but audible in the half-empty arena. "This is not just about money." CLICK. "This is about families." CLICK-CLICK. "This is about FAMILY VALUES." The economic plan Gephardt announces, a "voluntary" code of conduct that will allow for "seals on the products of companies" that manufacture in America, is greeted by polite applause.

"Is there any question in your mind that he is devoted to the working men and women in this country?" asks Perot, more the master of this moment than all the Gephardts of both parties combined. What's missing in Gephardt is an eagerness to connect, to break through the surface brightness of lights and cameras to the roiling darkness below. Despite his billions, it is the darker side of Ross Perot's enthusiasms that unite him so completely with his audience: the defiant tilt of his chin, the lurking, volatile resentments that animate every fiber of his being. The audience is, like him, a little too skinny, a little too fat, too loud, too shy, not quite ready for prime time, scorned by the politicians and the press. With their tailored suits, polished loafers, and Ivy League degrees, the politicians and the press stand together on one side of our razor-edged cultural divide, and Perot and his followers stand on the other, writ large, every day their collective cry throbbing through electronic ganglia of the newspaper and television stations: *Let us in!*

WISH UPON A STAR

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

On the sidewalks outside the arena, where the Dallas heat bakes the oxygen out of the air or in the air-conditioned comfort of the Hyatt it is possible, as a journalist, to stop angry voters and inquire as to the conditions of their lives. They are not too poor, not too rich; they are both compassionate and resentful. "I contribute to children. I contribute to Habitat for Humanity. I have adopted a child in Ethiopia," says Dolores Dwyer of Wisconsin, a placid enormous woman who waits with her husband John, on the sidewalk for the buses that will ferry them back to their hotel. Together, the Dwyers have raised eleven children, an undertaking that apparently has left John exhausted while providing Dolores with energy to spare. Her children work hard, and have always worked hard: "I'm in favor of cutting welfare," she says. The portion of federal spending devoted to welfare, she believes, is "close to half."

Anna Schoenfelt of Connecticut is pleased that so many politicians have come to Dallas. "They need the Perot voter," she explains, with the stern, assertive air of someone who has been ignored for too long. "They can't win without the Perot vote," she says, repeating the word "Perot" and "vote" throughout our conversation. In an age of identity politics, what Perot offers his followers is that most precious of gifts, an identity. Ann Schoenfelt is pleased to be recognized, to be courted by Dole and Gramm, to be asked important questions by reporters, to have a line devoted to her in the polls.

If the "Perot voters" have come to Dallas in search of recognition, for a surrogate momen in the television sun, it would be wrong to suggest that they are ignorant of what they call "the issues." Mary Hackensmith, Judy Duffy and Denise Jackson are a gracious trio of Californians, all of whom own copies of NAFTA and have read the treaty cover to cover—in Duffy's case "four or five times." They have come to hear the experts, to see "these great speakers whom we would never be able to see on our own." Duffy and Jackson belong to the country club precincts of Orange County; Mary Hackensmith does not. "We would not gravitate to one another in a social situation," she points out as her friends blanch at this tactless reference to the differences in status that might otherwise divide them. Like his "electronic town hall," Perot's politics is founded on the impeccably American premise that all men are created equal. The question of who benefits

ıd who does not can be safely overlooked.

Another question that Perot's supporters efer to overlook is why the leader sworn to ıeir interests so abruptly withdrew from the ce in 1992. The question troubles them be-ıuse it implies that they are not participants "the process," as Perot calls it, but props, a udio audience assembled for the cameras. In ıe Hyatt, where conference participants meet ound the bar and ride the glass elevators up ıd down, the need to reconcile love for Perot ith his betrayal gives rise to extraordinary leg-ıds, of threats and plots, of FBI and CIA in-ɔlvements, that melt away at the first evi-ence of disbelief. Only Sheila, a UWSA ɔordinator from Texas, is willing to risk her ory aloud, standing defiantly against the rge-screen TV as the news flashes and box ores go speeding by. "There was a story, hich never appeared in the papers, but it was ı the AP wire the day before Ross dropped ıt," she says. "And it said that he came out of ıs meeting with the Wall Street bankers, and is face was white. He was shaking. So what oes that tell you?" It is hard to say. A call to ıe Associated Press in New York fails to turn ɔ any record of the story.

THE DEEP, BLOOD-BOILING ANGER

ATURDAY, 10:00 A.M.

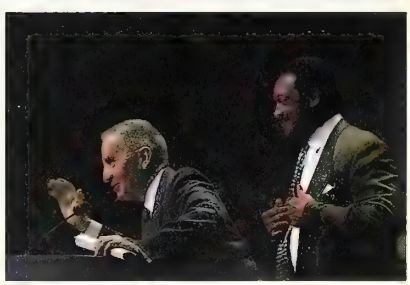
"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOUR OST . . . ROSS PEROT!" On the evening ews last night, on C-SPAN this morning, on ıe front page of the *Times* with his arm around sse Jackson—before our eyes Perot is growing rger and larger. "Didn't you love that young oman's voice?" he crows, putting an arm ound Julie, who arises Venus-like from the au-ience to warble an easy-listening ballad. "I am ɔ proud of you," Perot says, before reminding ıe audience to refrain from "the disruptive be-avior that has seemed to become an epidemic ı our country."

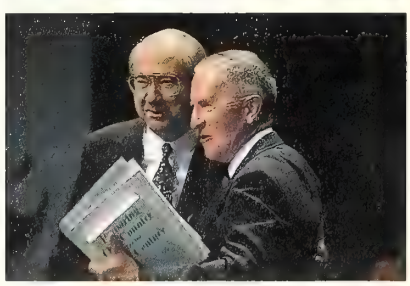
The need for this warning becomes clear hen Democratic Congresswoman Marcy Kap-ır of Ohio, in her frumpy powder-blue suit—vo women behind me snicker—delivers what ould be referred to by reporters as "a rousing enunciation of NAFTA" or, in the more vocative language of the Sunday fairgrounds, s "calling out the devil." She names his parts, natomizes his being: the horned treaties of IAFTA and GATT, the forked tails of multi-ational corporations shipping American jobs verseas. But she is only a minister of the hurch whose hierophant, Pat Buchanan, pro-eeds to bring the audience up out of its seats, gain and again, as he calls the roll of vanished ıdustrial towns of his youth. "So I want to say today to all the globalists up there in Tokyo and New York and Paris," he says, one hand on an imaginary Bible, the other raised to seal his solemn pledge, "when I raise my hand to take that oath of office, your new world order comes crashing down."

Buchanan's eyes roll heavenward; at moments of greater emotion, his voice drops to a stage whisper. He denounces bureaucrats "in sandals and beads telling us how America's children should be educated," who strike Paul Revere from history books for "some radical feminist convention that occurred in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1841 that I never heard of." The reporters in Ann Taylor dresses giggle. "Look how far they are going, my friends," Buchanan intones. "They turn Easter into Earth Day, and worship *dirt*," which would be a terrific line, but a transcript of his remarks reveals the words "worship it" instead. "Ah, what the hell," shrugs Gottlieb. "Let's just use 'dirt.' "







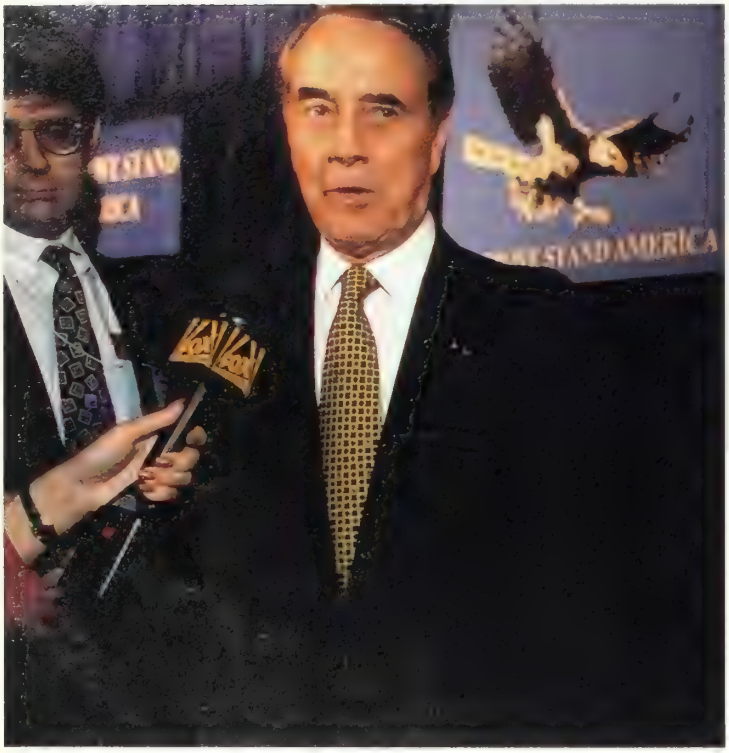


Most stories today, Gottlieb's included, will focus on "front-runner Dole" and his defense of American involvements abroad and, by describing the reaction to his speech as "mild" or "tepid," will make the response look better than it is. The crowd hates Bob Dole. He stands there unsmiling and takes it, the stony silence and the catcalls of "NAFTA." To describe the expression on Dole's face at this moment as a "shit-eating grin" would be to imply that Dole is grinning; he is not. He is eating shit. And, as always, his true feelings show through: "I'm not perfect." He glares. "Maybe everybody here is." Dole's momentary fit of courage cannot be denied, but when it comes right down to it, he wants to be president more than anything else in the world. "I have been tested and I have been tested and I have been tested," he proclaims, the blank despair of his closing cry echoing throughout the arena. "I am ready to lead."

ıotographs by Mark Peterson/Saba Press Photos

As Dole and Perot descend the podium, they are surrounded by reporters, with cameras and fuzzy boom mikes, hanging down from outstretched poles like some hairy species of tropical fruit. Frozen in position so as not to miss a word, they resemble a Bible engraving of the spies returning from the Promised Land:

"Why are you doing this?" someone shouts



to Perot, who has graciously broken from the pack to allow Dole room to maneuver.

"To educate the people on the issues," he shoots back, annoyed.

The audience is drifting from the room. Those who remain behind, with their sandwiches wrapped in waxy paper, are easy prey for reporters. The pitter-patter of question-and-answer fills the air like a gentle falling rain:

"... Illinois ..."

"... Wisconsin ..."

"... Ross Perot got me involved ..."

"... he tells it like it is ..."

"... the secret room in the Congress where they give out the favors ..."

"... He'll do what we say ..."

"... a deep, blood-boiling anger ..."

"... from Jacksonville, Florida ..."

"... so angry I can hardly speak ..."

Reporters seize on these fragments because they make sense. And yet, what does it mean when the people here oppose GATT, or insist, as some do, that the War Powers Act of 1933 marked the end of constitutional rule in the United States? The deeper meaning of these phrases is that people lack the language with which to express the fact that the economy has gone bad and our cities are a mess. Decades of prosperity have vanished, along with the polar opposition of good versus evil and the deference of our allies, now rivals, in Germany and Japan. What is happening here in Dallas, in the phrases of participants and politicians alike, is an attempt to put this difference into words, to make sense of a world greatly declined from the one we were supposed to inherit.

Dark-suited Republican candidates follow one another to the podium for their moment in the television sun:

Pete Wilson, who looks like a white-collar engineer from California before the defense industry crashed, rocks back and forth on the balls of his feet. His applause lines are artfully composed from the atoms of hundreds of focus groups, and his face seems to merge with the Plexiglas shield of the TelePrompTer.

"I don't dance to anybody's tune in Washington, D.C.," bellows Bob Dornan, every inch the soldier or cop. He is famous for his attacks on the President, whom he authentically seems to despise. "This is the most corrupt person to sit in the Oval Office ..." Dornan howls, "IN TWO HUNDRED YEARS."

Richard Lugar tries a different tack: "I've come to Texas to alert the American people to a most dangerous national security problem," he says, as if anyone wonders why he is here. "Suppose that ... terrorists had acquired a suitcase carrying a hundred-pound, grapefruit-size ball of highly enriched uranium." When Lugar warns that "the tip of Manhattan, including all the Wall Street financial district, would have been destroyed," the ears of his listeners momentarily perk up.

"I will be tomorrow's president," intones Phil Gramm, gazing deep into his crystal ball, so fa that his metaphors get cloudy. "I see Norman Rockwell paintings everywhere in the fabric o our families and in our country."

As the candidates speak, their handler make their way to the press room, where the walk the aisles, chatting with reporters, lettin them know how well their candidate has don Politics in the press room is personal, face-to face: Craig Fuller, the expansive former cam paign manager for George Bush, talks up Pet Wilson to David Broder of the *Washingto Post*. Fuller's silk handkerchief is carefully fold ed, three sharp red points against the sobe darkness of his suit; he looks like he has es caped from an ancient political cartoon, i which he stands by a spittoon, cigar in han urging the election of William McKinley

Photograph by Nina Berman/Sipa Pre

ger Stone, formerly of Black, Manafort, one & Kelly, the most powerful Republican nsultants in Washington, displays the smirk-g charm of a fraternity boy as he prances by th his latest horse, the glum and hapless len Specter, who is led gently into the pad-ck to deliver his few words to the press.

One by one, their stories filed, reporters zip their laptop bags and trundle off to the Hy-, there to begin the evening's round of long-stance calls home. "I have had a lot of long, nely battles," Perot consoles the press room m the monitors above, before recalling that e proper subject of his remarks is not "I" but ou." "The system still works," he assures his pporters. "You dreamed the impossible eam, and you are making it come true." In e absence of media, it is time for Perot to ex-nine his soul and to inform his followers of at he has found there. "We must never have rsonal agendas," he declares. "We've just got stay like the Salvation Army. And you *are* e the Salvation Army, and I am so proud of u that I can't express it adequately."

In the Hyatt bar, Gottlieb tells stories, which cus—in a gentle but persistent way—on food her than politicians, on the oysters and after-nner liqueurs served to the press by the Rock-eller campaign of 1968. He has a place in his art reserved for failures, such as Rockefeller, Ted Kennedy in 1980. "The press was differ-t then," Gottlieb recalls as the radiant Mau-en Dowd taps out her column behind us, a ass of water by her elbow. "There were a lot of ys on the plane who had read *The Boys on the* s and so on, and two of the cameramen in wa happened to record a barnyard scene in-lving two pigs. And every time I'd look up on e plane, there it was, this footage. And I'd ep thinking, 'Is this really why I went to col-ge?'" He shakes his head. "I spent an entire ar of my life watching those pigs fuck in the ad." As Gottlieb shakes his head again, it is ssible to determine the glint of a moral, that hough he is older, sadder, and wiser now, thing has changed, except, perhaps, that in-ead of reporting the news, the press has be-me, at once, its captive and its creator.

A PLACE CALLED HOPE

UNDAY, AUGUST 13, 8:15 A.M.

The presence of a rival illusionist, however stant he may be from the arena and from the arts of those who have gathered there, can felt the moment we enter the John Neely yant Room of the Adolphus Hotel for break-st with Mack McLarty, the President's boy-od friend from Hope. Dark, oak-paneled alls shine with the polishings of unseen hands, and all traces of Gottlieb's melancholy mood have vanished. "You're really gonna thank me for this," he insists as he piles slices of melon on his china plate. "Boy, are you ever going to be grateful."

As McLarty enters, the reporters stand up to shake his hand. "What makes you think that the people here will support the President?" asks Jack Germond, familiar from *The McLaughlin Group*. He is as visible here as the candidates. When Germond steps outside for a cigarette, the Perot followers line up to shake his hand.

"Ross feels that the President has a good heart and is well intentioned," says Mack McLarty, his purposeful air suggesting that he is more concerned about setting a presidential tone than with whether the reporters believe him or not. Not a hair on his head is out of place; his tie, perfectly centered, speaks of years of practice in front of a mirror, of a life that has progressed from success to success by dint of having made a good first impression.

"It's amazing as you travel throughout the country . . ." McLarty says now to the line of tape recorders on the polished oak table. If there is no news here, there is still the flattery of getting no news direct from McLarty himself. Also implicit in these surroundings is the message that he is our host, and that it is rude to ask your host unsettling questions over breakfast. "This was not a political effort on our part," says McLarty, straight-faced. "Ross grew up in Texarkana, and I grew up in Hope," he continues, "and so I have much the same feelings about . . . about . . ."

"YOU DREAMED THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM," PEROT ASSURES HIS SUPPORTERS, "AND YOU ARE MAKING IT COME TRUE"

"Hope?" Gottlieb prompts, glancing up from his melon.

"Hope," the grateful McLarty responds.

"Who do you think you are talking to at this event?" asks a reporter from the *Dallas Morning News*, a question that suggests, ungraciously, that Perot may speak for no one save himself, that these proceedings are representative not of a change in the people but merely of the ambitions of one man with enough money and enough sense to put on a show for the press. "A pretty eclectic group," McLarty answers. "There was pretty broad news coverage—C-Span, CNN . . ." The more troubling implications of the question have been lost, and none of the reporters, eager to believe that Dallas is news, eager to see their bylines on the front page tomorrow, seem interested in pursuing it further. McLarty smiles. He invokes the Common

Ground shared by the President and Perot.

"Really?" Gottlieb asks. "On what basis do you feel that?"

"Oh," McLarty breezily replies, touching three fingers of his right hand to his lips, as if, in the recesses of his mind, he is secretly clicking his heels together once, twice, three times and thinking of Arkansas, or Iowa, or New Hampshire, with their undoubtedly vast populations of Perot voters. "I have a feeling . . ."

OH, WHEN THE SAINTS . . .

SUNDAY, 4:00 P.M.

"SIDDOWN!" the Wizard booms. "You have done so much for this country." The song the band plays is "Wind Beneath My Wings," the anthem of the Gulf War. When Julie sings, "I would be nothing without you," Perot grins his crew-cut grin and points to the audience; they are proof of his powers. That only three thousand people have bothered to show up, leaving thousands of empty seats, doesn't matter at all. The press can mock him, ask snide, insinuating questions, but they need him every bit as much as he needs them. He is the face of the faceless numbers in the polls, the necessary personification of "anger" and "discontent." He is tomorrow's front-page story. "Ross," someone tells him, "this was like a political convention," and Perot likes the thought so much he says it himself: "This was almost as big and complex as a political convention," adding that it cost only 3 percent of the everyday political convention price.

"1-800-925-4000," he says, repeating for the last time his huckster's cry. Alone in the television lights, the Wizard draws the curtain to reveal the marvels within. And before the wondering eyes of a nation, the shabby, moth-eaten reforms come tumbling out, a Second Contract with America, Saturday and Sunday elections, campaign finance reform, a ban on exit polls "until the polls close in Hawaii," term limits, a Balanced Budget Amendment "that looks like the mouth of an alligator—it's got real teeth," and others too numerous to name—and not worth naming, because he changes the list an average of once a month. "This one is for Margo and for you," he says, pointing to his wife and then to the audience, "because we consider you to be part of our family."

After thirty-six speeches, hundreds of interviews, and endless miles of tape, the remaining members of the press sit with faces buried in their hands as the band strikes up "You Light Up My Life." But Ross Perot is not done yet. "Even when you were out of food, water, and ammunition . . ." he is saying, but it barely matters at all. To see the man behind the curtain not as a Wizard, or even a clown, but as a politician with millions to spend is to recognize him as the first to abandon the rusting machinery of party politics for the more permeable medium of political celebrity, where fame and dollars can be translated directly into influence and votes. That Perot's run in 1992—despite his "unpredictable behavior"—attracted nineteen million votes is proof, if further proof is needed, of the decadence of the democracy we currently enjoy. The politics of Democrats and Republicans, locked in perpetual struggle, it seems, was not a fact of nature but an illusion of the Cold War; it shattered at a touch.

Ross Perot's message to the people is the common message of all politicians: "You have the power." His message to the press, to the billionaires and generals, however, is more prophetic: *Let us admit that, in a political system ruled by money, those with the money do indeed make the rules.* If Perot remains an unlikely president—he is too mad, or too rich, or the butt of too many jokes—the candidate who follows him will bear none of this baggage. Free of the encumbrances of party, the nagging of pressure groups, this next candidate—Powell or Bradley or someone else—will stand in the television lights and speak directly to the whole of the people. He will seem reasonable and strong, and, recalling Perot, the press—and the rest of us—will sigh with relief.

To the jaunty strains of "When the Saints Go Marching In," the Emerald City is transformed, once again, into a drafty concrete palace, too small for professional basketball, too big and gloomy for a conventional convention. As I look down from the platform above the hall, it is hard to say exactly what has happened, whether the band was cued too early or the participants have simply seen enough. Perot descends from the podium, surrounded by the boom mikes and tape recorders, reporters hoping for one last quote, and the crowd makes its orderly way toward the exits. Seeing them leave, Perot seems to panic. He breaks into a trot, chasing after them, slowed down by reporters and crew members, tripping over the wires as they struggle to keep up. As he rushes across the floor, past the rows and rows of empty folding chairs, Ross Perot is still the story. He is the raw, uncut footage from which the crew-cut character on the evening news and in the newspapers will be assembled, to whom significance will be assigned, in accordance with his own tumultuous ambitions, and with the more sober narrative needs of the moment. He is the voice of the angry majority, a political has-been, or the future of American politics. He is the wonderful, wonderful Wizard of Oz. He is pure entertainment. ∎

DEPUTY SID'S GIFT

By Tim Gautreaux



I'm going to tell you bout the last time I vent to confession. I het this priest at the ursing home where I vork spoon-feeding the arish's old folks. He noiced I had a finger off, nd so he knew I was oil ield and wanted to now why I was working ndoors. This priest was blond guy with eyes ou could see through, nd didn't look like nobody inside of two hunred miles of Grand Crapaud, Louisiana. He didn't know that when weet crude slid under welve dollars a barrel, nost oil companies went pelly-up like a stinking edfish and guys like me had to move out or do omething else. So I told him I took a night class in scrubbing hese old babies, and he said I had a good heart and bull like that and invited me to come visit at the rectory f I ever needed to.

One day I needed to. Everybody's got something they got to talk about sometime in their life, and I had something I didn't feel too good about. I went to the old brick church on LeBlanc Street on a Saturday morning and found him by himself in his little kitchen in the old cypress house the church gives its priests, and we sat down by the table with a big pot of coffee.

So I told him what had been going through my head, how I used to have a 1962 Chevrolet pickup truck, a rusty spare I kept parked out by the road just to haul off trash. It was ratty and I was ashamed to drive it unless I was going to the dump. One day after Christmas my wife Monette told me to get rid of the tree and the holiday junk, so I went to start the truck. Well, in a minute I'm standing by the road with a key in my hand looking at a long patch of pale weeds where the truck used to be. I'm saying to myself that the truck could have been gone an hour or a week. It's just a thing you don't look at unless you need it.

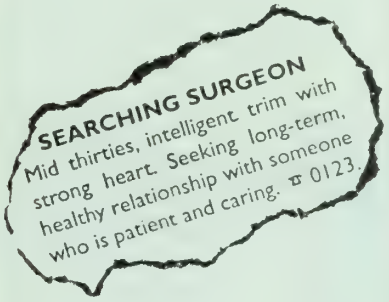
So I called Claude down at his little four-by-four city jail and he said he'd look for it the next day, that he had more expensive stuff to worry about. Ain't that a hell of a note. Then I call the sheriff's office down at the parish seat, and when I tell them the truck's over thirty years old they act like I'm asking them to look for a stolen newspaper or something. It was my truck and I wanted it back.

The priest, he just nodded along and poured us our first cup of coffee

Tim Gautreaux is director of the creative writing program at Southeastern Louisiana University. A collection of his stories will be published next year by St. Martin's Press.

Illustration by Calef Brown

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from a big aluminum drip-o-lator. When he finished, he put the pot in a shallow pan of water on the gas stove behind his chair and stared down at his shoes, like he was hearing my confession, which I guess he was.

I told the priest how the cops searched a little bit, and how I looked, but that old truck had just disappeared like rain on a hot street. Monette, she was glad to get it out the yard, but I needed something for hauling. So after not too long I found a good old '78 Ford for a thousand dollars and bought that and put it right where the other one was.

One day my little girl Lizette and me was at the nursing home together because of some student-visit-the-parent-at-work deal at her school. She was letting the old folks hug her little shoulders and pat her dark hair. You know how they are. They see a child and they go nuts to get at them, like the youngness is going to wear off on their old bodies. At the end of my shift one of the visitors who was there to see his dried-up wife—I think he was a Canulette, kind of a café au lait dude from out by Prairie Amère—his truck won't start, so me and Lizette decided to bring him home. We went off in my shiny thirdhand Buick, old man Canulette sitting between the two of us like a fence post. We rolled down the highway and turned off into the rice fields and went way back into the tree line toward Coconut Bayou. We were passing through that poor folks' section on the other side of Tonga Bend when Lizette stuck her head out the window to make her pigtails go straight in the wind. Next thing I knew she yelled, Daddy, there's your truck, back in the woods. I turned the car around in that little gravel road and sure enough—you couldn't hardly see it unless you had young eyes—there was my old Chevy parked up under a grove of live oaks maybe a hundred and fifty yards away.

We walked up on it, and judging from the thistles that grew up past the bumper it'd been there three months. I held back and asked Monsieur Canulette if anybody lived around there, and he looked at the truck and said his first word since town: Bezue. He said here and there in the woods a Bezue lived and they all had something wrong in their heads. I told him I'd put me a Bezue in jail if he stole my truck, but he just looked at me with those silver eyes of his in a way that gave me *les frissons*. I brought the old man to his little farm and then came back to Tonga Bend Store to call the deputy, who took most of an hour to get out there.

They sent Sid Touchard, that black devil, and he showed up with his shaggy curls full of pomade falling down his collar, the tape deck in his cruiser playing zydeco. He got out with a clipboard, like he knows how to write, and put on his cowboy hat. He asked me if I was the Bobby Simoneaux who called, and even Lizette looked behind her in the woods for maybe another Bobby Simoneaux, but I just nodded. He looked at the truck and the leaves and branches on it and asked me do I still want it. *Mais*, yeah, I told him. Then Sid walked up and put his hand on the door handle like it was something dirty, which I guess it was, and pulled. What we saw was a lot of trash paper, blankets, and old clothes. I looked close, and Lizette stepped back and put her little hands on her mouth. The air was nothing but mildew and armpit, and by the steering wheel was a nappy old head.

He's living in it, Deputy Sid said. His eyebrows went up when he said that. Even he was surprised, and he works the poor folks of the parish. He asked again do I still want it. Hell yeah, I said. He spit. He's a tall man and it takes a long time for his spit to hit the ground. Then he reached in and woke the man, who sat up and stared at us. He was black—back in the country black. He wasn't no old man, but he had those deep wrinkles the old folks call the sorrow grooves and he looked like he was made out of Naugahyde. His eyeballs was black olives floating in hot sauce, and when Sid tried to get out of him what he was doing in the truck, he took a deep breath and looked ove

he rusty hood toward the road.

Finally he said, I'm Fernest. 'ernest Bezue. My mamma, she lives lown that way. He pointed, and I ould see he'd been drunk maybe six 'ears in a row. The old cotton jacket ie had on was eat up with battery .cid, and his feet was bare knobs. Sid :ive me that look like he got on bi-ocals, but he ain't. Hell no, I told iim. I want my truck. He stole it and ou got to put him in jail. So Sid aid to him, you stole this truck? And Fernest kept looking at the road ike it was something he wasn't al-owed to see, and then he said he ound it here. When he said that I ust about snapped.

Deputy Sid tugged Fernest out in-o the sunlight, slow, like Fernest vas an old cow he was pulling out a angle of fence. He put him in the ruiser and told me and Lizette to et in the front seat. He said where 'ernest's mamma lived my Buick an't go. So we rolled down the ravel a mile, turned off on a shell oad where the chinaball and sticker ushes about dragged the paint off hat beat-up cruiser. The road gave ut at a pile of catbrier, and we urned left into a hard-bottom oulee full of rainwater next to Co-onut Bayou. The water come up to he hubcaps, and Lizette wiggled nd told Deputy Sid we on a ferry-oat for sure.

There's this little shotgun shack p on brick piers with the tar paper otting off it, stovepipe stub sticking ut the side wall, no steps to the oor, cypress knees coming up in he yard, egg cartons and water jugs loating around on the breeze. In the ackyard was a raggy hill of garbage. Deputy Sid leaned on the horn for naybe fifteen seconds until the ront door opened and a woman ook like a licorice stick stood there ressed in some old limp dress. He olled down the window and asked f it was her son in the backseat. She tooped slow, squinted a long time. That Fernest, she said to the water. he sure wasn't talking to us. Sid tepped out on a walk board and old me to follow.

While he talked to the woman I ooked in the house. All this while ny shoes was filling up with water.

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The first room had nothing but a mattress and a kerosene lamp on the floor and some bowls next to it. The walls was covered with newspaper to keep the wind out. In the second and last room the floor had fell in. The whole place was swayback because the termites had eat out the joists and side beams. Termite mud tracks ran up the walls, and it didn't take no genius to tell that the rafters wasn't gonna last another year. A wild animal would take to a hole in the ground before it lived in a place like that.

Deputy Sid asked the woman did she know about the truck, and she said he was living in it. He turned to me and said, look around. You want me to put him in jail?

Hell yeah, I told him, and Sid looked at me hard with those ox-blood eyes he got, trying to figure a road into my head. He told me if I file charges and put him in jail, that'd cost the parish. My tax money was gonna pay to feed him and put clothes on him. He said let him stay with his mamma. So I looked around again and saw that putting him in jail would be a promotion in life, all right.

Sid took off the bracelets and walked him to the house. The old lady said he could stay. Then we left, that cruiser bottoming out and fishtailing through the yard, its mud-grips digging down to the claypan. Back at my truck I threw all his stuff in a pile, old coats with cigarette holes burnt through, medicine bottles from the free clinic in town, dirty drawers I handled with a stick, knit caps, tangled blue jeans, fried chicken skin and bones, a little radio with leaking batteries. I put my key in but the engine didn't make a sound. When I opened up the hood all I saw was a pile of a thousand sticks and three long otter-looking animals that took off for the woods. The sheriff's tow truck brought the thing back to my house, and that was that. My wife took one look at it and one smell of it and told me it had to go. I already had one truck.

A rainy spell set in and the truck sank down in the backyard for a couple weeks with the crawfish chimneys coming up around it till I got a nic

ay and scrubbed it inside and out.)own at the home we got five new oor helpless folks from the govern- ıent without nobody dying to make)om for 'em, so another week passed efore I could get to the hardware store and buy me a nice orange FOR SALE sign.

Now this was when the priest ind of leaned back against the win-)w frame and made a faraway smile ıd looked out to the rose garden Fa- ıer Scheuter put in before they ansferred him to Nevada. Priests try ot to look you in the eye when)u're telling stuff. Scared maybe you on't tell it straight, or tell it all. So I)ld him straight that the second ight that old truck was parked back ıt on the street wearing that sign, it)t stole again. I called up Deputy id direct this time and told him hat happened. He said, you want e to look for that truck again? I told m, hell yeah. He said, don't you got truck already? I think that pomade d been smearing on his head all ıese years done soaked into his ain, and I told him that. He said,)u got a nice brick house, a wife, ree kids, and two cars. He said, you ight quit at that. He said he didn't el like burning fifty dollars of gas oking for a forty-dollar truck. I told m I would talk to the sheriff, and said okay, he'd look.

I wound up at the home helping ıt for Music Day, when Mr. Lo- igue brings his Silvertone guitar d amp to play songs the old folks cognize. Man, they love that rusty ıff like "As Time Goes By," "The ırimp Boats Is a-Coming," and ch 78 rpm tunes they can tap their et to. I get a kick out of them peo- e—one foot in the grave and still ing to boogie. And Mr. Lodrigue, ıo has wavy silver hair and kind of ıoky gray eyes, he looks like Frank natra to them old gals.

I got through with Music Day and nt out to where my car was at be- nd the home, and there, big as a ss, was Sid sitting on the hood of s muddy police car. I walked up d saw his arms was crossed. He d, I found it. I asked him where it s, and he said, where it was before. aid, you mean Fernest Bezue got it back in Prairie Amère? Man, that made me hot. Here I let him go free and he comes back on me like that. I cursed and spit twice. Deputy Sid looked at me like I was the thief. I asked him why didn't he haul him in, and he looked away. Finally he said, he's alcoholic. That got me hotter. Like *I* could go down to Generous Gaudet's used-car lot drunk and steal me a car and somebody would let *me* off. Deputy Sid nodded, but he said, Simoneaux, you play with those old people like they your own *grandpère* and *grandmère*. You don't know what *they* done wrong in their time. I sat down next to him when he said that. The hood metal popped in and shook loose a thought in my head that kind of got me worried. It was about the folks in the home. Maybe I was nice to the old people because I was paid for that. Nobody was paying me to be nice to a drunk Bezue from Prairie Amère. I spit on the sidewalk and wondered if Deputy Sid's as dumb as he looks. Then I thought about Fernest Bezue out under the oaks staring at the road. So I said, okay, get the tow truck to pull it in, and he says, no, I can't make a report because they'll pick him up.

How about that? I got to go get my own stolen truck. That's my tax dollars at work.

The pot on the range gave a little jump like a steam bubble got caught under its bottom, and the priest turned and got us another cup. He was frowning a little now, like his behind was hurting in that hard-bottom chair, but he didn't say anything, still didn't look.

I went on about how I wanted to do the right thing, how me and Monette got out on the gravel past Prairie Amère, trying to beat a big thunderstorm coming up from the Gulf. When we got to where the truck was, the wind was twisting those live oaks like they was rubber. Monette stayed in the Buick, and I walked up to the old red truck, and in the bed was Fernest, sitting down with a gallon of T&T port between his legs, just enjoying the breeze. You stole my truck again, I told him. He said he had to have a place

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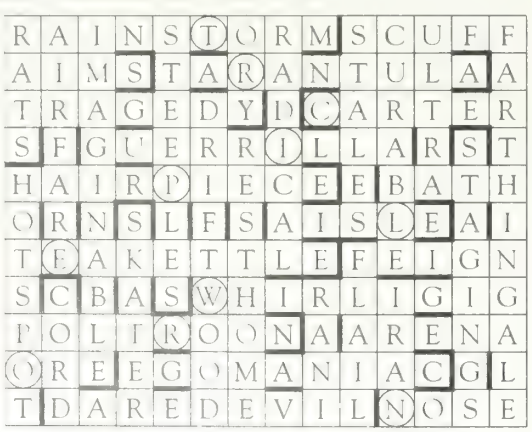
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Note: Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

HORSES: a. Egomaniac*; b. *Hair*-piece; c. tar(ant)ul*-a; d. d-are-devil (rev.); e. (b)rainstorm; f. whirl-l-gig; g. guerr(ill)a*; h. tak-(s)ettle. ACROSS: 7. s(ocializing)-cuff; ; 11. aims*; 12. *; 14. two mngs.; 18. bat-h(e); 20. hidden; 21. homonym; 25. *; 26. *; 27. two mngs.; 28. no-s.e. DOWN: 1. rev; 2. air-fare; 3. imaginabl*-e.; 4. steep-les(s); 5. o(p)ry; 6. two mngs.; 7 two mngs.; 8. curable; 9. hidden; 10. farthingale; 13. drift-wood (homophone); 15. rest-home; 16. two mngs.; 17. *; 19. *; 21. f(i.)ail; 22. two mngs.; 23. *; 24. i-ran.

SOLUTION TO OCTOBER DOUBLE ACROSTIC (NO. 154). MARIO PEI: (THE STORY OF) THE [illegible] of old English inns. One originally called the Caton Fidele turned into Cat and Fiddle; another, . . . Bacchanale, became Big [illegible] Nails, while Good Era [illegible] Compasses.

CONTEST RULES: Send the quotation, the name of the author, and the title of the work, together with your name and address, to Double Acrostic No. 155, *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. The solution will be printed in the November issue. Winners of the August Double Acrostic (No. 153) are Elizabeth Dumont, Newfane, Vermont; Joan R. Robinson, Ivorytown, Connecticut; and Leslie Allan Finch, Winnipeg, Canada.

to get away. He said it like he was living in a vacation home down on Holly Beach. He was staring up into the black cloud bank waiting for lightning. That's how people like him live, I guess, waiting to get knocked down and wondering why it happens to them. I looked at his round head and that dusty nap he had for hair and started to walk off. But he had what was mine and he didn't work for it, and I figured it would do him more harm than good to just give him something for nothing. I said if he could get two hundred dollars he could have the truck. I didn't know where that come from, but I said it. He said if he had two hundred dollars he wouldn't be sitting in the woods with a five-dollar gallon of wine. I wondered for a minute where he wanted to go, but just for a minute because I didn't want to get in his head. So I looked in the cab where he'd hot-wired the ignition, and sparked up that engine. I pulled out his blankets and some paper bags of food and threw them in a pile. Then I jumped up into the bed and put down the tailgate. I had to handle him like the real helpless one at the home, he was that drunk, and even in that wind he smelled sour like a wet towel bunched up in the trunk. I put the truck in gear and left him in the middle of that clearing under them oaks, him that wouldn't pay or work. When I rolled up on the road ahead of Monette in the Buick, the rain come like a water main broke in the sky. I looked back at Fernest Bezue and he was standing next to his pile of stuff, one finger in that jug by his leg and his head up like he was taking a shower. Then a big bolt come down across the road, and the rain blew sideways like busted glass, and I headed back for town.

All that night I rolled like a log in the bed. I thought the weather would blow over, but the storm set on Grand Crapaud like a flat iron and dropped big welding rods of lightning almost till dawn. On the way to work I got tempted to drive back to Prairie Amère, but I didn't and all that day I was forgetting to change bed linen and slopping foo

n the old babies when I fed 'em. It ook me a week to relax, to get so I ould clean the truck some more ithout seeing Fernest looking up at ne sky, waiting. I got it ready and ut it on the lawn, but this time I ook the battery out and left it in the arport. Nobody looked at it for out a week. One morning Lizette ne kissed me bye and went out to ait for the bus. A minute later I eard the screen door open and izette said the old truck was trying run. She said it was making a run- ing noise. So I went out and looked rough the glass. Fernest Bezue was there, snoring on his back like a wmill. When Lizette found out it as a big drunk man she yelled and n for the house. She was scared, nd I didn't like that. I opened the iver door, and it took me five min- es to convince him I wasn't Mr. udhomme, a cane farmer he used work for ten years back. When he t up, his left eye capsized, then me back slow, and it was weak, ke a lamp flame at sunup. He stared ut the windshield at a place I uldn't see.

I told Fernest I ought to pull him ut and turn the hose on him for aring my little girl like he did. He umbled something I didn't catch, d I told him to get the hell away. ut he just sat there in the middle that old sprung bench seat like he lf expected me to get in and drive m somewhere to eat. Finally he ld me the house had fell in and his omma had gone off somewhere d hadn't told him. Man, I let him ve it. Told him to stop that drink d get a job. He said that his drink- g was a disease, and I told him ah, it was a *lazy* disease. He said if could help it he would. That his ddy was the same way and died in wreck. I told him he was in a slow eck right now. I looked back at y house and them wilting camel- s Monette planted under the win- ws. Then I told him if he could y dry for a week I'd see if I could t him a mopping job at the rest me. He could save up and buy my ck. Then he put his head down d laughed. I can't stop, man, he d to me. That pissed me off so bad vent in and called the cops. After

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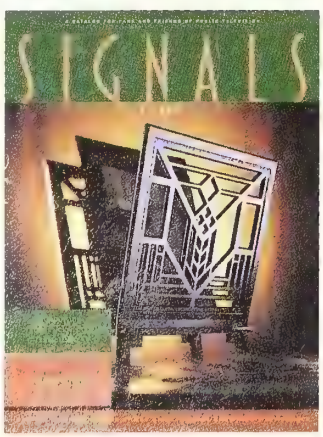
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a while Claude come over from the city jail. How they made a gun belt skinny enough for that man I don't know. He asked me, *mais*, what you 'spec us to do with him? Claude is real country, can't hardly talk American. He said Fernest can't do nothing to that truck he can take him in for. I said, arrest him, and I could see in Claude's eyes that no body was on the night shift to keep a watch on Fernest down at the one-cell jail. Do something, I told him. He's scaring Lizette sleeping out here.

What Claude did is put him in the squad car, stop by Bug's café, buy him a ham sandwich, and drop him off at the town limits, by the abandoned rice mill buildings. They told me that when I called the station later on.

This was when the priest got up and stretched. He pointed to my cup and I shook my head. He fixed himself one more with lots of cream, got a glass of water from the tap, and sat down again, looking at me just once real quick.

That made me feel like I could keep going, so I told him how the night and a couple nights more I couldn't sleep without dreaming something about that no-good drunk. I mean, lots of people need help. My one-legged uncle needs his grass cut, and I'd do it, but he says he don't want me to mess with it. Says I got better things to do with my time. Other people deserve my help, and that Fernest didn't deserve nothing yet when I went to sleep, there he was in my head. When I read the newspaper, there he was in a group picture until I focused real good. But after a while he started to fade again. I settled into business at the home putting ointment on the bald men's heads, putting Band-Aids on the old ladies' bunions so they can wear shoes, though there's no place for them to walk to.

Then one morning here she come, in with three poor folks that government paid us to take. Fernest's mamma, all dried up like beef jerky. She had herself a stroke out on Mr. Prudhomme's farm where she was staying for free in

ailer, and one side of her wouldn't ork. I stayed away from her for ree days, until it was time for Mr. odrigue the music man, when verybody gets together in the big om. I was just walking by to get Ir. Boudreaux his teeth, which he'd ft in the pocket of his bathrobe, hen her good arm stuck out and rabbed my fruity little uniform. I idn't want to look in her eye, but I id. She slid out her tongue and wet er lips. The mailbox is the onliest ing standing, she told me. The ouse fall in. I told her it's a shame, nd I wanted to walk away, but she ot hold of my little smock and alled it in her fist.

She told me his government check ome in and he goes to the mailbox, ien walks five miles for the wine. he said he was gonna die of the wine id couldn't I help. I looked at her id I felt cold as a lizard. I asked her hy me. She said, you the one. I told er he was past all help. He had the inking disease and that was that. I alled away and went and got old an Boudreaux's choppers, and when come back I saw her across the om, pointing at me with the one nger that'd still point. You're the ie, that finger said. I laughed and ld myself right then and there I asn't going to help no black drunk truck thief that couldn't be helped.

The priest, he made to swat a squito on his arm, but he changed s mind and blew it away with his eath. I didn't know if he was still tening good, but I kept on. Who ows if a priest is supposed to lis-n. I think you're supposed to be king to God and the man in the llar is just like a telephone. Any-y, I kept on.

I told him how after work I used e phone out in the parking lot to ll Deputy Sid to help me find rnest. I was ashamed of myself all ht. I didn't know what I was going do if Sid found him for me, but I d to do something to get the old dy's pointing finger out of my ad. I went home, and about an ur before sundown Deputy Sid lled up, and I went out to the nt yard carrying Lizette, who had a cold and was all leechy like a kid gets when she's feeling bad. Sid had had him a long day. His pomade hair hung down like a thirsty azalea. He said we got to go out to Prairie Amère, and so I put my little girl down, got in the old truck, and followed him out.

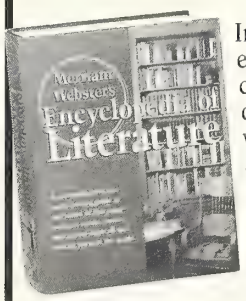
We went through the pine belt and past the rice fields those Thibodeaux boys own, and by them poor houses in Tonga Bend, then we broke out into Prairie Amère, which is mostly grass and weedflowers with a live oak every now and then but no crops. The old farmers say everything you plant there comes up with a bitter taste. All of a sudden the cruiser pulled off into the clover on the side of the road, so I rolled up behind. There wasn't a thing around, and I walked up and Deputy Sid said, empty land is a sad thing. He stretched and I could hear his gun belt creaking. I asked why we stopped, and he pointed. Maybe a hundred yards into the field, eat up by weeds, was a little barn, the kind where a dozen cows could get in out the sun. We jumped the ditch and scratched through the buttonbush and bull tongues. Deputy Sid stopped once and sneezed. He said I told him to find Fernest and he did. It wasn't easy but he did. He asked what did I want with him, and I said his mamma wanted me to check, but that wasn't it. It was the people at the home that made me do it. I was being paid to be nice to them. I wanted to do something without being paid. I didn't give a damn about some black truck thief, but I wanted to help him. I couldn't tell Deputy Sid this.

We got to the tin overhang on the barn, and we wasn't able to see much inside. The sun was about down. We stepped in and waited for our eyes to get used to the place. I could smell that peppery-sweet cypress. A building can be a hundred years old, if it's made of cypress you going to smell that. Along the side wall was a wooden feed rack three feet off the ground, and sleeping in there was Fernest, his face turned to that fine-grain wall. Deputy Sid let out a little noise in his throat like a woman would make. He said Fernest was trying to sleep above the ground so the

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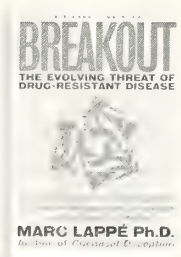
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ants couldn't get to him. He said one time two years before, Fernest passed out on the ground and woke up in blazes, with a million fire ants all over him like red pepper in an open wound. He stayed swollen up for three weeks, with hills of running pus all over him, and when his fever broke he was half blind and mostly deaf in one ear.

I went over to the feed trough and shook him. He smelled strong, and it took five minutes before he opened his eyes, and even in the dark you could see them glowing sick. I asked him was he all right, and he asked me was I his mamma, so I waited a minute for his head to get straight. Deputy Sid came close and picked up an empty bottle and sniffed it. I reached through the slats and hit Fernest's arm and asked him why he drank so damn much when he knew it would kill him. He looked up at me like I was stupid. He said the booze was like air to him. Like water. I told him maybe I could get him in the home with his mamma, and he stared up at the tin roof and shook his head. I asked Sid if maybe his mamma could get him picked up and put in the crazy house, and Sid told me no, he's not crazy, he's just drunk all the time. The state thinks there's a difference. Fernest sat up in the trough, hay all stuck in his hair, and he started coughing deep and wet, like some of the old folks do at the home late in the evening. His face got all uneven, and he asked me what I wanted. That stopped me. I opened my dumb mouth just to see what would come out, and told him that Deputy Sid bought my truck and was giving it to him so he could stay in it sometime. I held up the key and gave it to him. He nodded like he expected this, like people wake him up all the time and give him cars. I looked at Sid and I could see a gold star on a tooth, but he stayed quiet. Then I told Fernest I knew he couldn't drive it, and I was going take the insurance off anyway, but he could use it to sleep out of the weather like he done before. He looked at Sid and reached out and gave him some kind of boogaloo handshake. I went and pulled the truck up to the barn, then pulled the battery out just in case, and Deputy Sid brought me and the battery toward home. We moved away from all that flat, empty land, and after about five miles Sid asked why I told Fernest *he* gave him the car. I looked at a tornado-wrecked trailer on the side of the road and said I didn't want nothing for what I did.

I went home and expected to sleep, but I didn't. I thought I'd done something great, but by 2:00 A.M. I knew all I'd done was give away a trashy truck with the floor pans rusting out and all the window glass cracked. I gave up the truck mostly to make myself feel good, not to help Fernest Bezue. And that's what I told the priest I'd come there to tell him.

The priest looked at me in the eyes then, and I could see something coming, like a big truck or a train. Then he leaned in and I could smell the soap on him. He told me there's only one thing worse than what I did. I looked at the linoleum and asked, what's that. And he said, not doing it.

I like to fell out the chair.

About a month later Fernest's mamma died in the night, and I called up Deputy Sid at dawn. He went out to look but he couldn't find Fernest nowhere. Sid brought his big black self to my house, and I saw him bouncing up my drive like he got music in his veins instead of blood. He got on a new khaki uniform that's tight as a drumhead, knife creases all over. He told me the liquor store past Coconut Bayou said they ain't seen him. The mailbox at the old place been eat down by termites. None of the farmers seen him. I said, it's a shame we can't tell him about his mamma, and Deputy Sid looked at me sidewise and kissed his lips like he's hiding a smile. I told him to come inside, and Monette fixed us all a cup of coffee, and we sat down in the kitchen and cussed the government.

Summer come and the weather turned hot as the doorknob to hell. The old babies at the home couldn't roll around outside, so we had to keep 'em happy in the big room by playing cards and like that. I had to play canasta with six ladies who couldn't remember the rules between plays, so I would spend three hours a day explaining rules to a game we'd never finish.

I guess it was two months after Fernest's momma passed. I got home and sat in my easy chair by the air condition when Lizette come by and give me a little kiss and said Deputy Sid wanted me on the phone. So I went in the kitchen, and he told me he's in his cruiser out at Mr. Thibaut's place in the north end of the parish, west of Mamou. He found Fernest.

I couldn't say nothing for half a minute. I asked him was he drunk, and he said no, he was way past that, and I said when, and he said he died about yesterday in the truck. I got a picture of Fernest Bezue driving that wreck on the back roads, squinting through the cracked windshield, picking his spot for the night. I told Deputy Sid I was sorry, and he said don't feel like that. He said we couldn't do nothing for him but we did it anyway. ■

November Index Sources

1,2 Federal Election Commission (Washington); **3** Federal Election Commission (Washington)/*Harper's* research; **4** Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press (Washington); **5** The Gallup Organization (Princeton, N.J.); **6** Libertarian Party (Washington); Human SERVE (N.Y.C.); **8,9** U.S. Census Bureau; **10** Common Cause (Washington); **11** Electronic Privacy Information Center (Washington); **12** Brookings Institution (Washington); **13** Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community* (Westview Press, Boulder, Colo.)/United Nations (N.Y.C.); **14** ACLU National Prison Project (Washington); **15** Comissão Pastoral da Terra (Goiania, Brazil); **16** *The Irish Times* (Dublin); **17** World Health Organization (Washington)/*Harper's* research; **18,19** U.S. Department of State; **20** Dan La Botz, *Democracy in America* (South End Press, Boston); **21,22** Instituto Federal Electoral (Mexico City)/U.S. Census Bureau; **23** Moose Country Press (Warner, N.H.); **24** PEN American Center (N.Y.C.); **25** Fiji Mission to the United Nations (N.Y.C.); **26** German Embassy (Washington); **27** Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City); **28** Ronald Hutton, Bristol University (Bristol, England); **29** *U.S. Cricketer* (Bloomfield, N.J.); **30** Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (North Palm Beach, Fla.); **31** Soundscan Inc. (Hartsdale, N.Y.); **32** KRC Research & Consulting (N.Y.C.); **33** *Organic Gardening* (Emmaus, Pa.); **34** Hope Industries, Inc. (Farmingdale, N.Y.); **35,36** U.S. Naval Institute (Annapolis, Md.); **37** The Snapple Beverage Company (Valley Stream, N.Y.); **38** KO93-FM (Modesto, Calif.); **39** Butterball Turkey Talkline (Downers Grove, Ill.); **40** Mac (N.Y.C.).

MAKING THE INCEST SCENE

In novel after novel, writers grope for dark secrets

By Katie Roiphe

Among the books discussed in this essay:
The Secret History, by Donna Tartt. Ballantine. 503 pages. $6.99.
A Thousand Acres, by Jane Smiley. Fawcett Columbine. 371 pages. $12.
The Robber Bride, by Margaret Atwood. Bantam. 528 pages. $6.50.
Bastard out of Carolina, by Dorothy Allison. Plume. 309 pages. $10.95.
Two Girls, Fat and Thin, by Mary Gaitskill. Bantam. 388 pages. $6.99.
Our Father, by Marilyn French. Ballantine. 436 pages. $6.99.
The Sweet Hereafter, by Russell Banks. HarperPerennial. 257 pages. $12.
Push, by Sapphire. Knopf. To be published in 1996.

All unhappy families may ave been unhappy in their own ıshion in the days when Tol- oy wrote the famous opening nes of *Anna Karenina*, but to- ay's unhappy families—at least ı fiction—seem pretty much ıe same. It often happens that am in a bookstore leafing ırough one of the attractive ew hardcovers, with its soft olors and its matte sheen, hen my eye catches a phrase ı the inside jacket: "... until ıe is forced to come to terms ith the dark secret of her har- owing past." I know without ading any further what the ark secret is. My heart sinks: *ıother novel about incest.*

Sexual abuse, of course, is erywhere splashed across the ılture, wept about on talk ows, endlessly reported in the news. And writers of fiction have obligingly followed along; incest has become our latest literary vogue. We are deluged with descriptions of fathers taking their daughters on their laps and sliding their hands under their skirts or creeping into their bedrooms in the middle of the night. These images appear not only in best-selling mass-market books like Stephen King's *Gerald's Game* but also in the quieter pages of what we consider serious literary fiction, books that win Pulitzer Prizes and National Book Critics Circle Awards like Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*. Here the ancient theme of *Oedipus Rex* is accompanied by the clattering breakfast plates of twentieth-century realism and the tragic, shimmering myth becomes an actual event described in pornographic detail. As any consumer of current fiction will notice, our bookshelves are filled with stories of the family romance getting a little too romantic: Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*, E. Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*, Amy Bloom's *Come to Me*, Dorothy Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina*, Joyce Carol Oates's *You Must Remember This*, Heather Lewis's *House Rules*, Margaret Atwood's *The*



ıtie Roiphe is the author of The Morning fter: Sex, Fear and Feminism. *She re- ntly received a Ph.D. in English from inceton University and is at work on a w book.*

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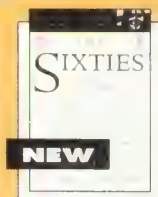
By G. J. Meyer. Nearing fifty years of age, Meyer was "let go" from his position as vice president of public relations at McDonnell Douglas. Eventually he found a new job in a distant city, which forced his family to relocate. This job, too, was eliminated, and Meyer found himself thrown onto the job market once again. This book interweaves Meyer's "war stories" of the chaotic job market with remembrances of his past as a blue-collar "wonder boy." Excerpted in *Harper's* July 1995 issue.

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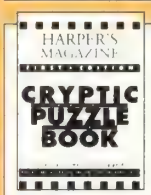
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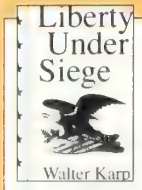
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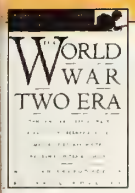
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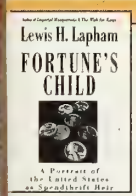
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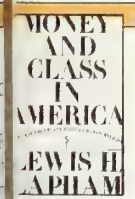
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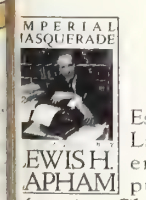
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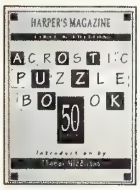
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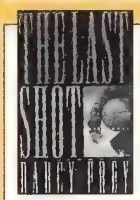


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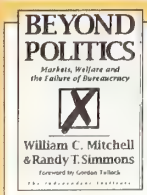
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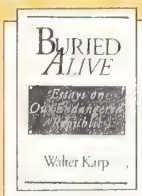
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Gaddis Hide, Marilyn French's *Our Father*, Mary Gaitskill's *Two Girls, Fat and Thin*, Geoffrey Wolff's *The Age of Consent*, Anne Rice's *The Witching Hour*, Josephine Hart's *Damage*, and Russell Banks's *The Sweet Hereafter*, to name only a few.

The trend continues. One of the most talked about bidding wars in the publishing world this year was not over a new thriller by Michael Crichton or John Grisham but over a half written first novel by an unknown female poet who calls herself Sapphire. "I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my fahver [*sic*]," the unpublished manuscript of *Push* begins. Set in the projects of Harlem, the story reveals a teenage girl who is sexually abused not just by her father but by her obese mother as well. Sapphire announces, "We is a nation of raped children." Whatever the truth of that, we are certainly a nation that wants to read about them.

Of course, every generation of writers pursues the mirage of the zeitgeist. In the Twenties, writers became enamored with disaffected Americans in Europe, and in the Thirties they discovered migrant workers and tenement dwellers. In the Sixties they became obsessed with psychiatrists and neuroses, and in the Eighties they found revelation in drugs and urban anomie. Each decade a batch of novels are announced as electric, explosive, original, articulate of our most pressing concerns. But zeitgeist fiction works like a newspaper: today's paper burns with importance only at 9:00 A.M.; yesterday's is out with the garbage. Most of the books that seemed so new, so relevant, so absolutely of the moment, fade. We are left with the best of these books, which are good not because they are about the subject everyone was discussing that [illegible] in spite of it.

[illegible] trend, it seems, blew [illegible] the hot porches of So[illegible]. The heirs of the gorh[illegible] of writers like William [illegible] Faulkner, Caldwell appe[illegible]d [illegible] to be mostly black women [illegible] the graphic sexual abuse in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1971) offered the prototypes for the modern incest scene. After that came Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), with the memorable incestuous moment—"he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around"—on the first page. Then, in the Eighties, the alchemy of academia and politics created a mainstream fascination with victims of all kinds; a concurrent rise of a certain pop-feminist sensibility made sexual victims particularly compelling—even requisite. By the early Nineties incest had swept across the literary map of America—into Mona Simpson's Californian cities, Jane Smiley's flat Midwestern farmlands, Mary Gaitskill's middle-class suburbs, Russell Banks's small upstate New York towns, and even E. Annie Proulx's icy Canadian islands. Incest, it would appear, is everywhere.

Novelists, we know, have been fascinated by incest for almost as long as there have been novels: in 1722, Daniel Defoe's racy heroine Moll Flanders discovers that the man she is happily married to is actually her brother. But in the glare of all the television lights and cameras focused on sexual abuse and recovered memory, today's incest scenes have an unmistakably current feel. "Why is there this empty place in my memory?" writes Marilyn French in *Our Father*, her prose vibrating with timeliness. A hundred pages later it turns out that there is an "empty place" in Alex's memory because her rich and politically powerful father molested her when she was in diapers. As the eighty-two-year-old patriarch lies in a coma, Alex and her three sisters, one of whom is the illegitimate daughter of the maid, gather together in his mansion and discover that he has had sex with all of them, as well as with one of his granddaughters. "It was so awful! It hurt and I didn't want it!" exclaims one of the sisters. In the climactic scene of disclosure, the story merges with something we just read in *People* or a scandal we just saw on the local news. The writer raises her voice to the ecstatic confessional pitch of *Oprah* and borrows the easy intimacy of weeping in front of millions of television viewers.

Smiley's critically acclaimed *A Thousand Acres* is the most prominent example of the new genre. In it, Smiley gives us a sixteenth-century drama with a twentieth-century twist: a sexually abusive *King Lear* set in the pastoral fields of modern Iowa. This time around the daughters, Ginny and Rose, have every reason to be angry at their strong-willed father. When they were young, the respected pillar of the community entered their yellow-and-pink-flowered bedrooms and had sex with them. Rose remembers and Ginny forgets. On finding out the dark secret, the reader is supposed to think with satisfaction, *Oh yes, now it all falls into place*. Ginny's passivity, Rose's hardness, their fear and anger and cruelty, their putting their father out in the furious storm—all make perfect sense. But what the reader really feels is frustration at the spectacle of a skillful writer using such a cheap trick: it's terrible to watch the potential grandeur of the book, the daughters' greed and bitterness, and all of the eternal mysteries of the Lear story collapse into such a politically trendy and prosaically simple solution.

It is in *A Thousand Acres* incest works as a kind of bargain-basement epiphany. Smiley is not alone. In *Our Father*, *The Age of Consent*, *House Rules*, and countless other novels, the entire story is reduced to a riddle, and incest is the answer. The riddle goes something like this: Mary or Maisie or Rose is acting kind of strange. She is fat or promiscuous or bitter or she dives headfirst into a shallow pond, and it turns out, many pages later, that Mary or Maisie or Rose was molested as a child by her father or stepfather or father figure. The discovery of the central fact is like a flash of lightning illuminating the entire book.

We have come to expect psychological lightning from the books we read on beaches and buses and trains. We want motives and symptoms and childhood traumas. We want years on the analyst's couch condensed into a single paragraph. We want the deep pleasure of what reviewers call "pen-

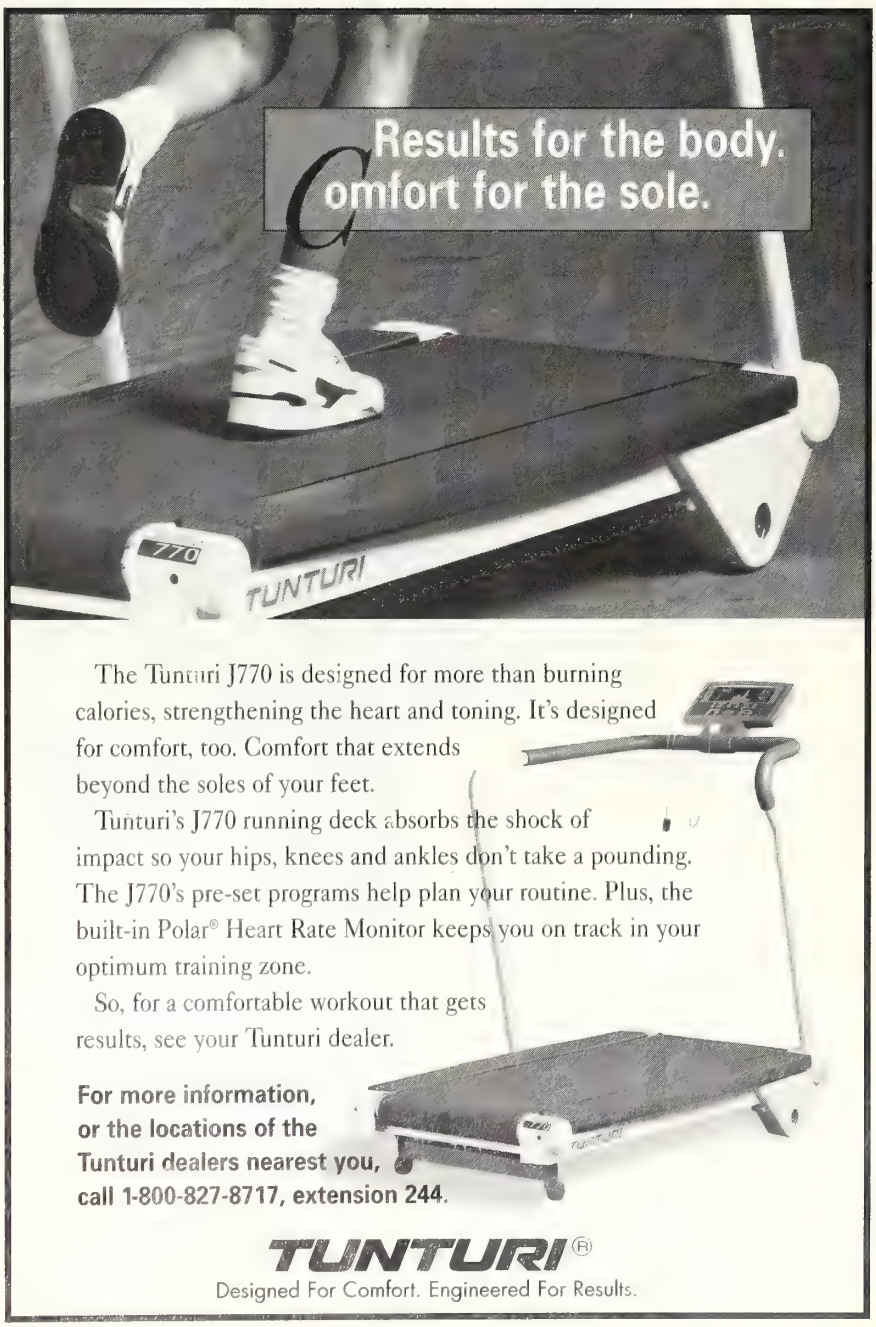
ating psychological insight," but we
n't, it would appear, want to work
o hard for it. Novels like Smiley's
fer the perfect solution—the thera-
utic thrill of delving into the past
mbined with the fast-food conve-
ence of pre-packaged interpreta-
on: one overarching explanation for
erything that's gone wrong. Such
oks operate on the idea, borrowed
m talk shows, that the complexity
human character must be present-
, analyzed, and solved in the
space of one hour, not in-
cluding commercials.

s the subject of incest inherently
eap? Not necessarily. But the situa-
n itself is so extreme that it grabs
r interest with very little skill on
e part of the writer—like a murder
a car crash, it jolts us into the sto-
As the father reaches under his
ughter's nightgown, we can't help
t be fascinated. Amy Bloom may
a talented writer, but when she
ites about a mother having sex
th her stepson she doesn't really
ve to be; she gets our attention
yway. A Freudian would say that
ing this subconscious stuff drama-
ed appeals to our most primal fears
d fantasies. Whatever the appeal,
situation itself, as in the follow-
instance from Mary Gaitskill's
o Girls, Fat and Thin*, demands our
npathy and leaves us vaguely re-
tful in the manner of a Hollywood
rjerker :

> He pulled me against him, crushing
> my face into the chest hairs exposed
> by his open pajama top. I felt the
> power and insistence in his embrace,
> felt how tight were the muscles of his
> embracing arm. . . . I put out my hands
> and clutched his pajamas in my fists.
> "Yes," he said, his voice crushed and
> strange. "Yes." He moved his hand
> away from my chest, not loosening his
> grip on my shoulders. Through the
> gown, he touched between my legs.
> Shock impaled my body.

Gaitskill's words leap off the page.
I have to feel sympathy, horror,
l the breathless panic of the thir-
n-year-old being molested by her
ner. Gaitskill continues, "My flan-
gown scrunched up around my
ulders and my buttocks rubbed by
at felt like the blunt, hairless limb
of a medium-sized animal." Because of the nature of the crime, the characters tend to be separated in crude shorthand: father, evil; daughter, innocent. The girl with her nightgown scrunched up over her shoulders versus "the blunt, hairless limb of a medium-sized animal." Because the drama is so literal, we get none of the play of the shadowy tensions in, say, *Hamlet*, none of the everyday ambiguities, hopes, pleasures, disillusionments, depressions of a novel by authors like John Updike and Carol Shields, who write about the human world in all of its radiant confusion.

There is, nonetheless, something tough and appealing about writers like Gaitskill, Simpson, and Allison writing about the traditional domestic scene in a way that Louisa May Alcott would never have dreamed of doing. At their best, books about incest have, like Allison's *Bastard out of Carolina*, the irreverent, anarchic energy that comes from exposing one's family of origin. But at its worst, incest fic-



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...ion has the lifeless feel of a feminist textbook. "Let me tell you what it was *really* like," the writer seems to whisper in our ear, but so often that reality seems to be a stitched-together collection of political clichés. "I was like something he owned," writes Simpson. "You ... felt ... that fathers owned the bodies of their daughters," writes French. "We were just his, to do with as he pleased, like the pond or the houses or the hogs or the crops," writes Smiley. At moments like these, one hears the political wheels turning beneath the prose. French dedicates *Our Father* to Gloria Steinem, and we definitely feel Steinem in her prose: "The only thing the four of them had in common was his ... abuse. Maybe that was all women as a sex had in common." After reading these lines, the incest, no matter how dramatically described, appears to be simply an illustration of a political point. Patriarchy, it seems, is screwing us over a little too literally.

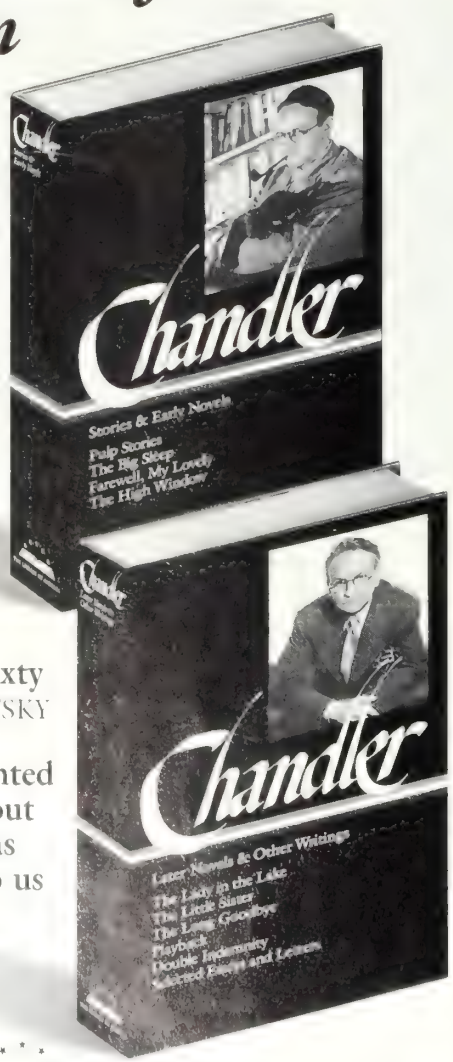
This particular dark view of the family comes straight out of a literary tradition that began in the Seventies with the profusion of men-are-bastards fiction; in the lively pages of well-loved novels by writers like Hilma Wolitzer and Nora Ephron husbands were always having affairs with their pregnant wives' best friends.[1] Incest was the natural next step: men are not just bastards; they're monsters.

As if the political predictability of these incest scenes is not bad enough, there is also an astonishing sameness to the way they are staged even by writers with wildly different voices. Whether they are narrated in the expressionless Eighties deadpan of Simpson, Lewis, and Gaitskill, or with the tremulous anger of Atwood and French, or the hallucinatory frenzy of King, the scenes themselves follow strikingly similar patterns. They are all rendered with pornographic precision (none of the head-turning innuendo of the incest in, say, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*). We see the act in cinematic detail—the penis, usually described as a "hard thing," and the underwear, always described as "panties." The drama itself is also recounted in remarkably similar terms. "He pushed my skirt to the side and slid his left hand down between my legs," writes Allison. "He'd slide his hand ... up my leg, under my skirt," writes Banks. "He puts ... his hand up under her pleated school skirt and slides her panties right down," writes Atwood. Then come the obligatory fingers: "His fingers ... gouging me," writes Gaitskill. "His fingers gouged at me," writes Allison. "He was tearing my insides," writes French. "He was tearing me apart," writes Allison. And the

[1] *Like Cheever and Updike, Salinger and Roth, these writers want to show the family hypocrisy, what happens behind locked doors in bathrooms and bedrooms and basements. But in choosing to do so in this particular way, they have created its mirror opposite, which is just as boring and implausible as the sitcoms of Fifties domesticity. The new incest novels have replaced one set of artificial characters with another: benign patriarchs with brutal perverts.*

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ere are the literal images of radical tachment: "My arms and legs flew om my pinned body to the corners the ceiling, then back into their ckets, then back to the ceiling," rites Gaitskill. "She flies over to e window and in behind the curin," writes Atwood.

By this point we anticipate the ythms, the rubbing and touching the lap scene, the father's smell, e escalation, the sneaking into drooms, the shame, the confuon. It all comes to sound the me—the stock plot of a culture sessed with sexual abuse. What ay once have been a daring subct, what took our breath away in oni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, has now become a paralyzed literary convention.[2]

There is, admittedly, no rule that iters have to write about new situons: we still want to read about ve, adultery, and death. It wouldn't atter that the subject of incest is longer fresh except that it so intently announces its own freshss. When the writers of current inst novels darkly foreshadow what o come, when they carefully build the terrible scene, they rely on the mmer and flash of novelty. They liver the scene itself with the athless tone of revelation: as each her slides under the covers with s young teenage daughter, the rds themselves quiver with the ling, *I am the first person ever to e written about this.*

It's possible that the incest scene ld be made new, but at this late e we can't help suspecting that the scene is the product of cultural opportunism, a sign that the author has lost sight of what separates literature from *Melrose Place*. Beneath the swelling prose, the panties and the nightgowns, one feels the selling principle at work. Sex sells and perverse sex sells more—a sentiment confirmed during the fierce bidding war for Sapphire's *Push*. That the unfinished manuscript finally sold to Knopf for a reported $500,000 is testimony to the commercial potential of this particular form of suffering. Sapphire's novel itself is aptly named. The idea behind the larger literary trend toward sensationalism seems to be to push one step further, to push for the purest rage, the most lurid crime, the most innocent victim. The idea, finally, is to shock the virtually unshockable modern reader.

The irony is that while incest in life will never cease to appall us, incest in its written form is no longer shocking. After a while we read these scenes with the same numbness we feel watching people being blown up in the movies. Incest is no longer the dirtiest secret or the most unimaginable act, since we seem to talk about and imagine it all the time.

Young writers like Heather Lewis clearly have been reading their Dorothy Allison, Sapphire clearly has been reading her Alice Walker. And there is a whole new generation of writers, still in writing programs and dorm rooms, crumpling pages, drinking coffee, eyes fixed to their computers, who will read Lewis and Sapphire, as a new batch of novels with "dark secrets" and "harrowing pasts" finds its way onto editors' desks. Until one fine morning when some publisher gets out of bed and thinks, *I've heard enough about incest.* And some writer sits in her cramped studio apartment typing away at her novel, thinking, *This is like nothing anyone has seen before.* And slowly at first, and then more quickly, other publishers and writers will turn, with good intentions, with dollar signs in their eyes, to the next hot subject, the next modish plot twist. Let it be soon. ■

he ancient taboo becomes simply a way pice up sex scenes. There is the vacant, ish incest in Tartt's The Secret Histo- *The fact that the tousled blond twins, arles and Camilla, happen to be sleeping ther lends no richness to the reader's unstanding; it only contributes to the generambience of bored decadence, like the tinis they drink and the pale garden parlothes they wear. The incest scene in Atd's popular tale of female betrayal,* The ber Bride, *may be more traumatic, but also entirely beside the point; vanishing the general excesses of the abuse-filled y, it becomes as psychologically superfluas the pink-icing flower on a birthday . It simply adds color.*

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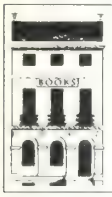
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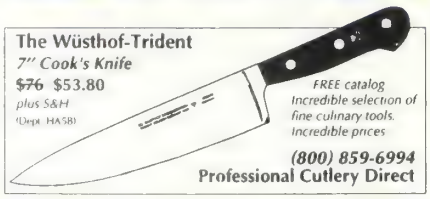
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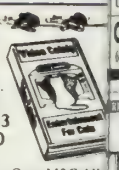
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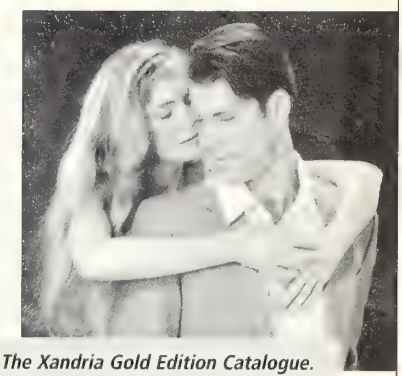
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Immigration Fuels U.S. Population Growth

We at Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) believe that our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment.

We believe, therefore, that U.S. population growth should be halted as soon as possible, and eventually reversed.

But, unless our present massive immigration is drastically reduced, we will never be able to stabilize our population at a sustainable level.

In the decade of the 80s we grew by some 25 million. Immigration, both legal and illegal, accounted for about 40 percent of that huge increase in our numbers. Projections are that we will grow by at least as much in the 90s.

If present rates of fertility and immigration continue, our population, now over 264 million, will pass 400 million shortly after 2050, with no end to growth in sight! Such growth would be catastrophic both for our environment, and for our standard of living.

We need to halt **illegal** immigration and reduce **legal** immigration to a comprehensive ceiling of 100,000 a year, including all relatives, refugees and asylees.

We now allow more than 800,000 **legal** immigrants to come here each year. Their numbers are swelled by over 300,000 **illegal** immigrants who each year settle here permanently.

Advocates of Massive Immigration Are Wrong!

There are powerful forces that fight not only to keep immigration at the present high level, but to increase it. Among them are employers who want low-wage labor, ethnic groups whose leaders seek greater political power, and some humanitarians who believe in virtually open borders.

They also include pro-growth advocates who believe that an ever-growing labor force, fueled by immigration, is necessary to achieve their goal of an ever-increasing GNP. That goal, in the real world of environmental and resource limits, is a recipe for disaster.

How Can We Best Help Others?

Beyond any question, the United States should maintain the humane policies toward immigrants and refugees that have characterized its past.

But we need to express our compassion in an intelligent way. Our priority should be to improve living conditions in the developing countries, rather than to allow vast numbers of their citizens to settle here.

World population is growing by some 90 million a year, and almost all of that growth occurs in the developing countries. We cannot possibly allow more than a tiny fraction of those millions to come here. What can we do to help all those who have no choice but to remain at home?

One thing is crystal clear. The problems of the underdeveloped countries are beyond solution by emigration. To pretend otherwise is simply self-delusion.

Nothing can permanently improve living conditions in these countries unless they first halt their population growth, the root cause of their poverty and environmental degradation.

Those who assert that eradicating poverty is a prerequisite for halting population growth have the process just backwards. Only after halting their population growth can developing countries even begin to bring their standard of living up to an adequate level.

We should spare no effort or expense to help those nations that are prepared to make a determined effort to halt, and eventually to reverse, their population growth.

We Need A Sensible U.S. Immigration Policy

We cannot continue to allow our national immigration policy to be dictated by special interest groups who pursue their own agendas without regard for the broad national interest.

Our immigration policy should be an integral part of a national population policy aimed at halting, and then reversing, our population growth, so that U.S. population can eventually be stabilized at a lower, more sustainable level.

As Americans, our first obligation, to ourselves and to our children and grandchildren, is to restore and preserve the land we have inherited. In shaping our immigration policy our top priority must be our own national interest, and the welfare of present and future generations of Americans.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE.**

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ETTERS

ntinued from page 5

th each day that we remain in igno-
nce and leave the decisions to the
liticians and the lobbyists. I think
rper's ought to try again.

oward Rheingold
ll Valley, Calif.

It's pretty clear who "we" and
verybody" are to John Perry Barlow
d Kevin Kelly. Nobody in the Au-
st Forum sees fit to mention that it
almost exclusively the well-con-
cted who are destined to be cyber-
nnected. If we are to believe the
nelists, the sole alternative to Bar-
w and Kelly's brazenly self-serving
ion is some ex-hippie's anachronis-
lifestyle choice. Meanwhile, Bar-
w plays dumb by reciting for the
pteenth time his gee-whiz résumé,
f cattle rancher and lyricist for the
ateful Dead's Bob Weir were op-
ns available to everyone.

At first it seems as if Mark Slouka is
ng to say something interesting
en he brings up the vast amount of
ney being invested in the cyber-
am. But he and Birkerts are soon
uced to defending the attractions
ooks and small towns. Is it polite-
s that keeps them from pointing
that the unalloyed optimism of
cyberspokesman is but the atti-
e required of any salesman?

As long as Barlow, Kelly, and
npany keep droning their pitch-
n's mantra while Slouka, Birkerts,
l company fail to call them on it,
ybe no one will notice how awful-
narrow the pyramid is getting at
top.

is Wood
Angeles

t seems as if John Perry Barlow's
d faith in the goodness of technol-
blinkers his vision of our recent
. The latest can't-do-without-it is
laced by the next can't-do-with-
it at a frequency that keeps the ad-
n buzzing and citizens no better
n slavish consumers. The tractor,
r all, was ballyhooed as a relief for
farmer from the drudgery of physi-
labor, but it relieved him of a way
fe as well, and often put him past
eyeballs in debt.

You deserve a factual look at...

Those "West Bank" Settlements

Are they *really* the "greatest obstacle to peace"?

In the context of the ongoing negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, it is often asserted that the Israeli towns and villages (usually and with some derogation referred to as "settlements") in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") are a hindrance to peace. That has been and is being repeated so often that many have come to accept it as truth.

What are the facts?

A thumbnail history. In order to gain perspective, some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times—without interruption. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank) *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights. In 1922, contrary to the Mandate of the League of Nations, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan River and gave it to the Hashemites as reward for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan was left for Jewish settlement.

The "West Bank" occupied by Jordan. In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews in the territories west of the Jordan River, the British had enough and relinquished the Mandate. The United Nations proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the United Nations, the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated the six Arab armies. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan promptly renamed itself Jordan.

Israel recaptures the "West Bank" in the Six-Day War. Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of whether they were Israelis, Americans or citizens of any other country, were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser joined by the same array of Arab armies that had unsuccessfully tried to destroy Israel at its birth in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. The Israelis pre-empted and utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the Six-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed not only the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), but also the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and had occupied Egypt's vast Sinai Peninsula.

> "How can 150,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be an "obstacle to peace"? Over one million Arabs live in Israel...nobody considers *them* an obstacle to peace."

It is clear from this abbreviated history that Israel's claim to the "West Bank" is at least as strong as that of the Arabs. It's only by dint of constant repetition that the world has come to think of these territories as "occupied Arab land". About 150,000 Jews now live in these territories. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews cannot live? How can 150,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be "an obstacle to peace"? Over one million Arabs live in Israel. They are citizens, they have every civil right, and of course have nothing to fear from their Jewish fellow citizens. Certainly, nobody considers *them* an obstacle to peace.

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What exactly does the Internet offer? As far as I can tell, it allows people from disparate places to send messages to each other rapidly. The advantage of sending an electronic message that isn't urgent rapidly is not readily apparent to me, though I trust that there is a burgeoning desire for it.

Faster isn't closer, in spite of what technology trumpets. If the future lies in the speedy, aggressive communication for which Barlow yearns, all I can say is, "Look around!" We are already wallowing in it, and we would do well to pull the plug and see *where* and *who* at present we really are.

Andrew Vaisius
Winnipeg, Manitoba

As a semiretired librarian, I had great hopes when the Internet threatened to surface. Finally, I thought, here was a place for the computer nerds to go, a haven into which they might disappear, to return to us librarians our clientele—the minority of reading and thinking individuals—before the last of the midlist publishers were driven out of business. Alas, the old librarians are almost gone; the morons have seized control. The Kevin Kellys of this world proudly offer the "largest functioning anarchy in the world" while the new librarians fall all over themselves to log on, and when I sleep I dream of dynamite.

Doug Kermode
Sparks, Nevada

The discussion in the August Forum reminded me of the thousand hacking at the branches of the Tree of Evil yet ignoring its roots. And the roots of this tree were exposed in the excerpts from the Internet, printed alongside the discussion and, significantly, "outside" it. It is clear from these excerpts that the force behind the Internet is neither inevitable transformation nor a revolution in human affairs. It is loneliness.

The truth is that our way of life has made this new technology necessary. Exhausted from working all day, we go home to avoid any further contact with humanity. But we *need* contact, and the Internet allows us to get it while continuing to lead lives of quiet desperation.

What looms before us is not the promised glories of an "Information Age" but a return to the worst excesses of the Industrial Revolution, and the Internet is not the cure for this malaise but a placebo that will make the privations seem bearable.

Sadly, the Internet will do nothing to remove the cause of our loneliness. It will only deceive us with another, ultimately meager, outlet.

Robert M. Jeffers
St. Louis

When Sven Birkerts quoted Rilke in defense of his contrarian attitude toward cyberspace, he missed a much more applicable poem by the same author. From *The Sonnets to Orpheus:*

> Master, do you hear the New
> quiver and rumble?
> Harbingers step forth who
> blare their approval.
>
> Surely no ear is whole
> amid this noise,
> yet the machine-part still
> asks for our praise.
>
> Look, the machine:
> rears up and takes revenge,
> brings us to crawl and cringe.
>
> Since all its strength is from us,
> let it, desireless,
> serve and remain.

Steve Grayson
Seattle

Et Tu?

In the September Letters, Diana Arand takes Michael Lind to task for referring to nursing as a "low-skilled service" in his essay "To Have and Have Not" [June], yet she is guilty of the same sort of snobbery herself when she asks Lind to imagine himself "look[ing] up from the stretcher to see a truck driver waiting to take care of him." Let us turn the tables on nurse Arand and imagine that she is suddenly put behind the wheel of a "big rig" and told that she is responsible for delivering supplies to our nation's hospitals. She would learn pretty quickly that some very important things are delivered by truckers, and maybe she would get her head out of the clouds.

Debbie Runnels
Henderson, Texas

Buggin'

Harper's Magazine demonstrated serious lack of knowledge about in sects by including the following iten in the August Index: "Estimate number of bug zappers required t kill all the insects in the world 1,104,120,000,000."

The great majority of insect bi mass on Earth consists of ants an termites, organisms that spend mo of their time on or under the groun Although occasionally winged du ing brief mating periods, both an and termites participate in matin flights during *daylight* hours. Th even ten trillion "bug zappers" wou have little impact on total inse biomass.

Please try to be more careful wi your insect facts in the future. A though insects are the dominant li form on Earth, it always surprises just how little people know abo them.

Jeffrey A. Millstein
Cambridge, Mass.

Correction:

Due to an editing error, "Put o Happy Face," by Benjamin DeM (September), asserted that black fant mortality rates are rising. though the difference between int mortality rates for blacks and wh is increasing, rates for both races in fact, declining.

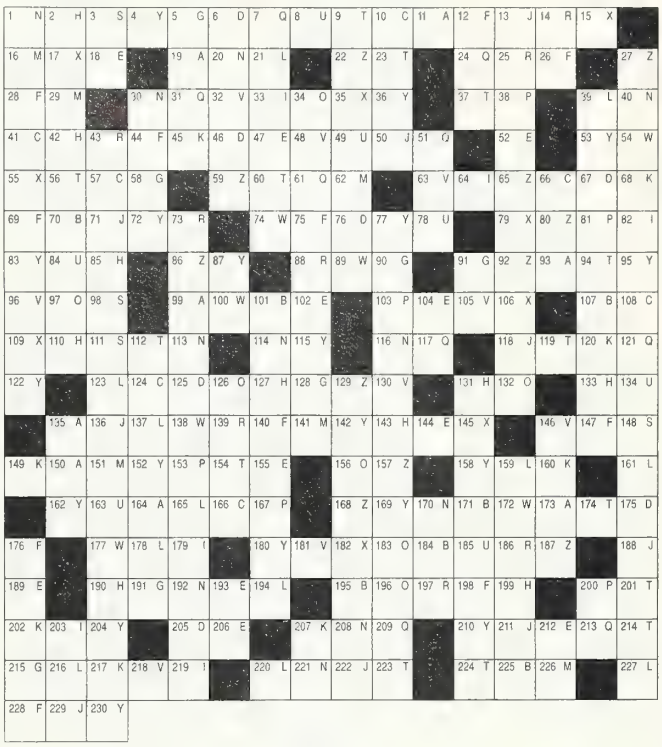
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DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 155

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right-hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 60.



CLUES — WORDS

A. Defeating, getting the best of — 135 19 164 11 173 150 93 / 99

B. N. American Indian tribe of Algonquian language stock — 70 184 171 107 195 225 101

C. Laceless footwear — 57 166 124 66 41 108 10

D. "The short and simple annals of ____" (2 wds.; Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard") — 125 205 6 46 67 76 175

E. Taught — 212 193 144 52 155 104 47 18 / 189 206 102

F. Ring, echo — 44 176 198 228 140 75 28 147 / 12 69 26

G. Wealthy — 91 215 128 191 58 90 5

H. Credits, trusts (2 wds.) — 190 127 143 133 85 110 199 42 / 131 2

I. Dublin-born playwright (1880–1964; "The Silver Tassie") — 64 33 82 179 203 219

J. Johann David Wyss's Swiss family — 211 136 71 188 13 229 118 50 / 222

K. Had a strong desire — 149 207 45 68 217 202 160 120

L. Italian dessert featuring custard, liqueur, etc. (2 wds.) — 227 216 39 123 161 178 137 194 / 220 159 165 21

M. Vacillate in speech, writing, etc. — 29 16 141 151 62 226

N. Boarding, as of a ship — 113 116 30 1 40 170 208 114 / 192 221 20

O. Like a native of Riga, e.g. — 196 183 156 132 126 97 34

P. Really (2 wds.) — 153 167 38 200 81 103

Q. Glendower says, "I can call spirits from the ____" (2 wds., *Henry IV, Part 1*) — 213 31 51 24 117 209 121 61 / 7

R. Beauty-loving — 139 186 14 25 73 88 197 43

S. Fr. actor-director (1908–82) who played Hulot — 3 148 98 111

T. Extraordinarily wrong (4 wds.) — 37 174 223 214 154 56 9 201 / 224 23 94 60 119 112

U. Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra — 49 8 163 84 78 185 134

V. Picking — 130 96 218 105 63 32 48 181 / 146

W. Junkie — 177 100 172 89 54 74 138

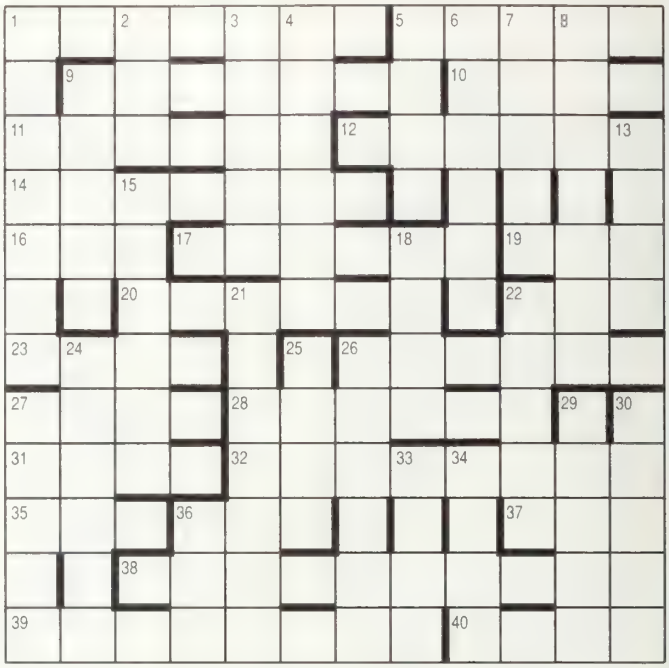
X x — 109 145 15 182 35 17 79 55 / 106

Y. "There were an Antony / Would ____, and put a tongue / In every wound of Caesar's" (4 wds., *Julius Caesar*) — 53 142 95 87 72 169 83 210 / 152 115 77 204 36 162 4 / 122 180 230 158

Z. "She's ____" (4 wds. from a 1947 polka by Ross MacLean and Arthur Richardson) — 187 86 22 59 92 129 27 157 / 168 65 80

Secret Weapon

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli



This month's instructions: A simple coding device must be applied to fifteen of the twenty-four Across answers before they can be entered in the diagram, which is why word lengths are not given. The coding device is a common one and, in fact, is named in the squares running diagonally through the diagram, reading from upper right to lower left. Down clues and the remaining nine Across clues are normal.

Clue answers include five proper names and two common foreign words. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 60.

ACROSS

1. Number for . . . pesticide?
5. Capital measured out in bushels, in kilograms . . .
9. Feed one in pursuit of two TV aliens
10. Notion linking head to heart
11. In charge of making lines
12. To ruminate is etatigoc? (two words)
14. Free lunch ain't without its limitations
16. Skinhead can knock out drunk
17. Sexual perversity involving family members (family members with a very curvaceous figure)
19. Truck backing in hides lizards
20. American ship in space upset foreign country
22. Disheartened but taking excellent risk
23. Turncoat fit to be broken in rank
26. Make a network get into a grave relationship
27. Fritz gets emergency room signal
28. Having light lunch, but throwing away more than half a penny
31. Looks, sounds like an elegant quality
32. Liberal philosopher who's priceless?
35. Nice friend writes a note
36. Exhibit in fairs
37. Toy left inside, when taken out, leaves you kind of blue
38. Armored car guy's up on Cold War policy
39. It's called kitsch—in synch with this, you'd have everything (two words)
40. Knitter unravels just a trifle

DOWN

1. Dodge parked inside for each one who goes over (7)
2. Sick state, briefly (3)
3. Hammer a nail in a porch (5)
4. Single shot in marbles (6)
5. Fence you can't see—that's a laugh! (2-2)
6. Look inside: I see working girl in a hotel (6)
7. Latin American composer is . . . (5)
8. . . . one who steals a shoe (7)
9. Places where you hang out decapitated family members (5)
13. Put your faith in timeless deterioration (4)
15. Cerebral follower dropping in around your first wife (6)
18. One going in three directions—is that logical (4)
21. Not wanting to share flesh is unhealthy (7)
22. *Little Women* namesakes affect the nonsense all around (5)
24. Astringent in getting a comeuppance, old boy, in England (6)
25. Political killer with a Scottish accent (4)
26. In animated cinema, he used to give you chills (6)
27. Vacancy makes boy lean over? Just the opposite! (5)
29. Deny being close to a conviction (5)
30. Tear over part that's the pits (5)
33. Lots of time for a nose job (4)
34. After Los Angeles, this is the most recent trial (4)
36. The narrative sweep of *Middlemarch*? (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Secret Weapon," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by November 8. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the January 1996 issue. Winners of the September puzzle, "No Entry," are George White, Waban, Massachusetts; Tomas Schonbek, Boca Raton, Florida; and Reggie Abraham, Brooklyn, New York.



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Puzzle 80 *Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli*

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LETTERS

Black and White and Red in the Face

Benjamin DeMott's essay "Put on a Happy Face" [September], in which he argues that Hollywood's depictions of interracial friendships obscure the truth about race relations in this country, left me wanting. That he can feel justified in framing the issue of race in America as "those who have done the depriving" versus "the deprived" makes me think he's viewing the situation from a roomful of history books. In schools, neighborhoods, hospitals, and corporate office buildings, Americans of various races work side by side. They discuss what they saw on TV last night, and they exchange opinions about sports, politics, new computers, and, yes, movies. Birthdays, weddings, and holidays are celebrated with common ceremonies, and the media celebrate blacks who represent positive images of what our culture values and wishes to export to the rest of the world.

I wonder how DeMott can write that "[t]he movies reflect the larger dynamic of wish and dream," and then need to spend pages telling the reader that what happens in *Pulp Fiction* and *Lethal Weapon* isn't really true. From my seat in the theater that's pretty clear, and I'm not worried that the public is being fooled either. Black movie heroes are now handsome, intelligent, competent men; black women have moved up to portraying mothers, wives, and sex objects, just like the majority of white women in the movies. Is this not an improvement on Steppin Fetchit and goggle-eyed Mammy?

I don't wish to minimize the enormous legacy of inhumanity that informs black and white issues in this country, but the issue has become much broader and more shaded than the metaphoric black-and-white. We live our lives not upon a piece of graph paper but in small increments of attention and interaction. That's where we'll find the truth.

Susan Roether
Hollywood

Although Benjamin DeMott acknowledges that "the images and messages of devoted relationships between blacks and whites do exert a humanizing influence," he nevertheless refuses to see them as anything other than an attempt by whites to rid themselves of guilt without having "to ante up for welfare and . . . more wasteful ransom" money. Guilt, it seems, is the only emotion he will allow for whites confronted with the "chronicle of atrocity" toward black Americans; that whites could feel honest empathy toward blacks is something he seems never to have considered.

Perhaps only when self-righteous writers such as DeMott overcome their own fear of being seduced by "the orthodoxy of friendship," and stop expecting whites to feel guilt as a matter of course, will they realize that only through humanizing relationships will blacks and whites be able to work together for lasting change.

Gaines Harris
Hercules, Calif.

Harper's Magazine welcomes reader response. Please address correspondence to Letters Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual acknowledgment.

Benjamin DeMott's "Put on a appy Face" makes the valid and ecessary point that interracial iendship is a promising step, but we ustn't let it fool us into thinking at the battle for racial equality has en won. I have an African-Ameri-n friend who is as dear to me as yone in my life has ever been, and ho has helped me over the years to e beyond my whiteness. But the sparity in black and white infant ortality rates, income, and life ex-ctancy remains appallingly wide, d our friendship exists, as we do, thin this context.

It is easy for the vast majority of hites to deny that they harbor any stility whatsoever toward blacks, cause, as DeMott makes clear, the of black inferiority has gone un-rground of late and we rarely see it. s, let's be friendly, and let's pump our goodwill for the journey to e equality. But let's be honest ough with ourselves that we can't tricked into believing we have al-dy arrived.

H. Batten
ncouver, Wash.

I hate to defend America's TV rality, but I think I must after ding Benjamin DeMott's essay. t us not forget that the primary rpose of the media is to make the ggest buck and sell the most tooth-ste, and not to preach or educate less it greases the sale. This, in ef-t, gives the people what they nt, although it is also true that, as March Hare said somewhere in onderland, they want what they . It is through this circular dynam-that the media—that is, the tooth-ste sellers—are able to influence nerican morality. Images of blacks l whites as friends simply go over ter with consumers than do im-s of murderous street gangs and el white slave drivers. Otherwise wouldn't be seeing them.

The people have spoken through ir ability to buy toothpaste. They racial amity, and they want to see re of it. Is this too much to ask?

k Whittaker
ncouver, B.C.

Benjamin DeMott is surprised that Hollywood romanticizes race relations. I'm surprised he's surprised, because his analysis doesn't go much beyond the silver screen. If our "vision of friendship" is "a smiling but monstrous lie," and we have been happily seduced into ignoring the "chronicle of atrocity" that is our history of race relations, then where are we to go if not to the movies?

William E. Johnston Jr.
Richmond, Calif.

Have Attitude, Will Travel

Sallie Tisdale's daffily incoherent trashing of the travel writing of Paul Theroux, Jonathan Raban, Bruce Chatwin, and others ["Never Let the Locals See Your Map," September] deserves rebuke, if only for its wild misrepresentations of the books discussed. It is appalling to think that this willfully reductive essay might put someone off reading them.

One would never guess, from Tis-

Continued on page 77



NOTEBOOK

Christmas carol

By Lewis H. Lapham

You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements.

—Norman Douglas

Wandering among the remote shelves of a Fifth Avenue bookstore in late October, I came across a small stack of books on the floor near a freight elevator, ten or twelve copies of a cheaply printed paperback bound up with string and marked with a slip of paper identifying them as goods in transit. Assuming that they were what was left of the summer's best-selling news about the O. J. Simpson trial, and curious to see which authors and what theories of criminal justice were being returned to pulp, I lifted the corner of the invoice and was surprised to find Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* in a red cover with the familiar illustration of Mr. Fezziwig's ball. I had mistaken the direction of the shipment. Books that I had thought were going out were coming in, but the sales clerks apparently hadn't decided where to place what the publisher's tag line described as "the most beloved Christmas tale of them all."

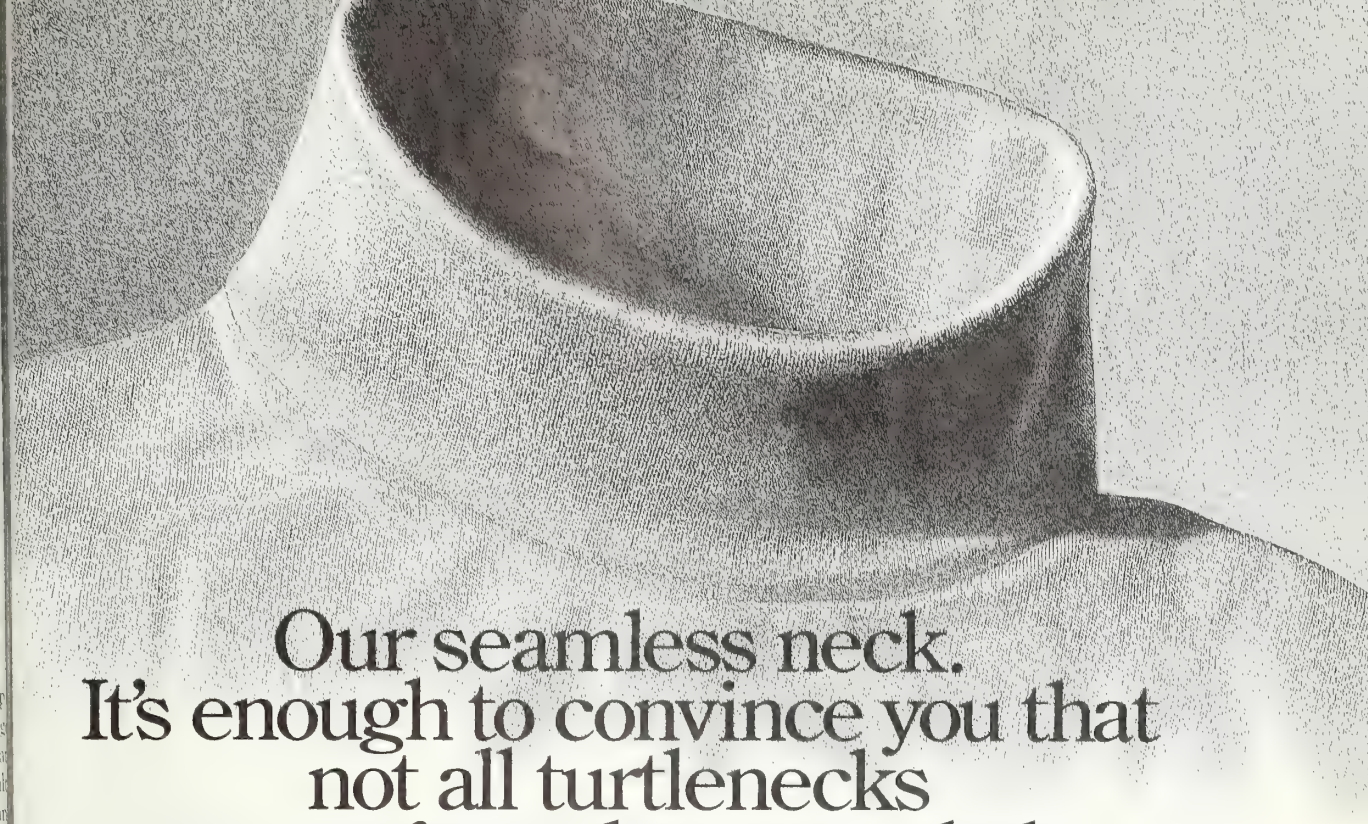
As I continued to browse among the season's newest political tracts, many of them about bringing discipline to the nation's economy and strengthening its penal codes, it occurred to me that maybe the clerks were embarrassed by the mawkish sentimentality of the beloved tale. Maybe they were reluctant to display it in the front of a store that undoubtedly numbered among its patrons quite a few corporate managers apt to possess precisely those qualities that Dickens so deplored in Ebenezer Scrooge—"Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire, secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster." It won't do these days to make a mockery of wealth or portray a rich businessman as anything other than a hero of the people. Money is the proof of grace, and a miser, as every schoolchild knows, is a great and good conservative. The plot line of *A Christmas Carol* didn't fit the bracing spirit of the times, and neither did its irresponsible moral lesson. Here was old Scrooge, an exemplary Republican, troubled in his sleep by ghostly dreams of human kindness, changed into a gibbering liberal at the sight of a crippled child. Hardly an inspiring tale of triumphant profit taking and certainly not one that anybody would want to place next to a handsome photograph of Newt Gingrich or Peter Lynch.

Sensitive to the predicament of the sales staff, I wondered whether it might be possible to rewrite *A Christmas Carol* in a way that more nearly matched the forthright, manly teaching of the Contract with America. Not an easy revision, of course, and one that would require some fairly heavy-handed deconstruction of the text, but after a few moments' thought, and taking heart from the brisk sales at the cash register of *Beyond Prozac* and *Your Sacred Self*, I understood that the tale was probably best retold as a sequel. As follows:

STAVE I

Our story begins with the ap
palling sight of Ebenezer T. Scroog
V, a benign and mild-mannered ma
in his late fifties, generous to a fault
who for many years has been squan
dering his great-great-grandfather'
noble fortune on misguided scheme
to rescue the unrepentant poor. Th
imbecile philanthropist sits reading
romantic novel by Leo Tolstoy in
small but cheerful library surrounde
by the worthless tokens of an idea
ist's misspent life—photograph
signed by Mahatma Gandhi, Ga
Hart, and Hillary Clinton, civ
awards mounted in second-rate s
ver, a pet owl, forgotten reports fro
forgotten presidential commissio
appointed to study racial injusti
and environmental disgrace, Ma
Twain's walking stick, books pu
lished by Marxist university profe
sors, framed letters of appreciati
from the students of an elementa
school in Ciudad Juárez, a bowl
Hudson River mud.

It is the hour after sunset
Christmas Eve, and the rest of t
house is full of music and light. T
children and grandchildren
Ebenezer Scrooge V, all of them t
careless with money (too careless
far) and too easily moved to laug
ter (to the point of impertinenc
have invited so many guests to d
ner that they can't remember h
many places to set at the tab
They make a joyful noise of th
preparations, the clattering of pla
and the popping of champag



Our seamless neck. It's enough to convince you that not all turtlenecks are cut from the same cloth.

e could tell you tons about a Lands' End® turtleneck. today, let's focus on the neck. cause what we put into *that* nough to make you feel warm ver.

or one thing, our neck is rib- to size in a *single piece.* So, e's no need for a seam. Now, u've ever worn a turtle that a seam here, you know how n rub and chafe you. Doesn't pen with ours.

nother thing: our neck, like body, is made of 100% sta- cotton, or a cotton/poly d, if you prefer. But we add uch of Lycra® spandex to it. s lets the neck s-t-r-e-t-c-h. can roll it into a turtleneck, wash it time and again – it won't sag or poop out some.

A neck is not a neck is not a neck.

neck has a hard life. Just k of the trauma it goes ugh every time you pull it your head. So, we add ther bit of Lycra® spandex re the neck connects to the shoulders. When you squiggle through, it *gives* a little.

(Some turtlenecks use a piece of cotton tape here. It doesn't stretch the same way; it's likely to pucker and tear.)

We could tell you lots more about the neck – and obviously, about the rest of our turtle. We'll just mention one other thing: the price.

"What? Only $15?"

It's only $15 for men's or women's regular: same as it's been for five years now. (Tall and larger sizes are a little more.) That's astounding when you think of all that goes into these beauties.

But it's not astounding when you know Lands' End. You see, we've built our whole business on giving our customers quality products, at a fair price. And that's as true of our sweaters and buttondown shirts and soft luggage, as it is of our turtles.

Most times, we'll fill your order within 24 hours. (If you want monogramming or inseaming that can add a day or two.) Then, we'll deliver it almost anywhere via UPS just two business days later. And it'll come "Guaranteed. Period.®"

See for yourself. Call us here in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, day or night, and ask our friendly operator for a catalog.

Then go shopping in it whenever the spirit moves you.

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1-800-356-4444

Please mention ad [TP]

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Address _____

_____ Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____ Day/Night (circle one)

Mail to: 1 Lands' End Lane, Dodgeville, WI 53595
E-Mail: catalogs4p@landsend.com

[illegible] and three voices singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

The ghost of Jacob Marley drifts through the library door looking as dismal as it looked in London in 1843, "like a bad lobster in a dark cellar," but instead of being weighted down with heavy locks and chains, the apparition takes the form of a scolding family lawyer come to correct the spendthrift heir with the switch of sound advice. Scrooge suggests a glass of wine, "a little something to restore the color to your cheeks," but Marley waves the offer impatiently aside and reminds the descendant of his former partner that the money is all but gone, the trust funds nearly exhausted, and the warehouses on the verge of bankruptcy. Before floating out the window, the ghost tells Scrooge to expect three unearthly visitors, three spirits who, if he heeds them well, will recall him to the bosom of Mammon.

STAVE II

The Ghost of Christmas Past bears a remarkable resemblance to John D. Rockefeller, the founder of the fortune of that name and known during his long and grasping life as the incarnation of stinginess. Somber as a pallbearer, looking more like a starved New England clergyman than a well-fed financier, the ghost bids Scrooge rise from his chair and walk with him in the night sky on a grand tour of America as it existed a hundred years ago, the old, economically competitive America, innocent of labor unions and free of feminists. The spirit shows Scrooge a series of canonical scenes: gangs of Chinese laborers laying railroad track across the Nevada desert, handsome policemen mounted on thoroughbred horses suppressing Irish mobs, criminals on treadmills, unheated shoe factories in the dead of winter, the children bent to their tasks in orderly and uncomplaining rows, patriotic newspapermen wearing checked suits and bowler hats, bowing like kewpie dolls to the magnates of the Gilded Age, grim country parsons singing psalms, picturesque beggars in sprightly rags, indigent pensioners dying as unobtrusively as flies, too proud of their American heritage (independent and self-reliant) to bother anybody with a plea for help or a cry of pain.

Presented as an album of prints by Currier & Ives, the little scenes blink on and off at regular intervals through the scudding cloud, and to each of them the Ghost of Christmas Past affixes, like a Christmas ribbon or a sprig of holly, the ornament of an edifying thought:

"Beware, Ebenezer Scrooge, the ageless ingratitude of the poor."

"Never show sympathy to people from whom you can expect nothing in return."

"Charity destroys initiative and rots the will to industry and enterprise."

Scrooge stands abashed before the solemn images of frugality and thrift. For the first time in his wastrel's life, he begins to apprehend the majesty of a cold and savage heart, and when the spirit returns him to the comfort of his library he glances at the fire burning on the hearth and thinks that it would cast a purer light with one log instead of four.

STAVE III

No sooner has the clock struck the hour of ten than the Ghost of Christmas Present rises up through the floor like the genie from Aladdin's Lamp—a figure not dissimilar to that of Rush Limbaugh or Roseanne—grinning, corpulent, and huge, the soul of perfect selfishness. Dressed in a loose gown of flowered silk and wearing on its gigantic head a crown of cloves and pineapples, the apparition claps Scrooge boisterously on the back and announces, amid gusts of booming laughter, that it has come to teach the lessons of gratified desire. Only fools and saints and New Deal Democrats subordinate their own comforts to those of others or put off until tomorrow pleasures that can be seized today. So saying, and as if to prove its point, the great spirit seizes Scrooge by the wrist, drags him upward through the roof, and spreads before him a second panoramic view of America the Beautiful. Once again the purpose is didactic, but instead of dwelling on the triumphs of the past, the genie of the shopper's lamp displays the glories of the miraculous present. The settings are all suburban—office parks and shopping malls, resort communities protected by high walls and iron gates, ski lodges, university quadrangles, boat marinas. No black or brown people appear anywhere in sight—no red or yellow people, nobody wearing rings in his ear or her nose, no loud musical instruments, no government bureaucrats, no street vendors selling filthy foreign foods. All the factories have been turned into overpriced restaurants, all the assembly lines neatly trimmed and downsized (like the hedges at the entrance of a good hotel), all the IRS agents turned into tennis instructors or personal trainers.

Enfolding Scrooge within the giant arc of its ham-like arm, and with a chuckle as merry as the holiday catalogue from Bloomingdale's, the Ghost of Christmas Present invites him to gaze upon the prizes that money buys for people mature enough to know that in the end and when all is said and done (no matter what happens to anybody in Bosnia or Queens), they have only themselves to please. From the depths of the now starry night a magnificent procession of shining luxuries floats before Scrooge's eyes, and as the objects pass splendidly by, the great spirit names them as the orphaned pleasures that Scrooge has foolishly forsworn.

The last yacht and the last cashmere cap drift slowly away to the south, and Scrooge once again discovers himself in his library listlessly turning the pages of a book that suddenly seems as dingy and old as Leo Tolstoy's beard. It occurs to him that maybe he has lived too long in the company of the dispossessed. As a child he had known about the marble fountains and the heavy motor cars, and he had seen magazine advertisements for the racehorses and Italian suits, but the second unearthly visitor had surprised him with some of the newer and more complicated toys—menageries of tame politicians in silver cages, miniature billionaires no bigger than fawn

ıewspaper editors cleverly contrived o sing like the golden, mechanical ›irds once made for the amusement ›f Oriental princes.

STAVE IV

In the hour before midnight the ‹pirit of Christmas Yet to Come, an minous and silent figure in a black hroud, summons Scrooge with the esture of one outstretched hand—a and as pale as death—to the rench doors leading out into the ›se garden. Scrooge has by now be-ome wary of strange sights. Guess-ıg at the nature of the dreadful en-ertainment likely to appear among ıe rosebushes, he rises unwillingly om his chair, afraid to look upon ıe face of doom. In a small and reeping voice he asks for program otes: "You are about to show me ıadows of things that have not hap-ened but will happen in the time efore us? Is that so, Spirit?"

The phantom neither speaks nor ıoves. The outstretched hand raws back the curtain of the night, ıd the garden blooms with scenes pandemonium that look like they ight have been jointly painted by ın Brueghel and Hieronymus osch: the entire population of Ok-homa stoned on drugs and heavy etal rock bands loose in the Iowa ›rn, undocumented aliens disem-ırking from ships (like the animals escending from Noah's ark) in ery port on the once well-defend-l American coast, unemployed ›rporate executives (white and iddle-aged) selling apples on the eps of the Pentagon, lewd women s young and licentious as Calvin ein's child models, as old and in-tiable as the Wife of Bath) selling xual favors in Harvard Yard, gay ıd lesbian parades in Salt Lake ity, debates in Congress conduct-l in Gangsta Rap, fifth-grade class-oms studying the history of ›rnographic film (a twenty-seven-rt series produced by the Public oadcasting System and narrated Bill Moyers), shiftless fathers rowing away their children like ıpty beer cans, unwed mothers ırsing unbaptised infants on the ›or of the New York Stock Ex-ange, altar boys spinning roulette wheels and nobody reading William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*, young black men in velvet top hats standing around on street corners frightening the police.

Scrooge cannot bear to look upon the dreadful scene for more than twenty minutes. He falls trembling to his knees, clutching at the phantom's robe.

"Hear me, good Spirit. Why show me this if I am past all hope? I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this gift of Phil Gramm's grace."

The phantom departs as silently as it came, and the exhausted Scrooge falls into a fitful sleep, dreaming of reform schools.

STAVE V

Faithful to the miracle of redemption, Scrooge awakens on Christmas morning restored to the winter glory of his ancestors—his cheeks noticeably shriveled, his blood four degrees colder in his stiffened veins, a suddenly squeezing, wrenching, envious man whose movements have become as quick and nervous as a lizard's tongue. At last Scrooge has come to know the meaning of a dollar and the beauty of the bottom line. In a hurry to be up and dressed, his hands busy with his shirt and tie while at the same time talking on a cellular phone, he cancels the clown ordered for a children's cancer ward, instructs his brokers to buy shares in companies that own and manage prisons, orders the closing of seven factories, chases out of the house the company of useless guests, berates the cook (for putting too much stuffing in the Christmas turkey), disinherits his grandchildren, and sells the owl. Later in the morning, on the way to his office in New York City, Scrooge walks briskly north on Fifth Avenue, shaking his shrunken fists at the Christmas wreaths but coveting, like any other loyal American, all the precious merchandise in all the better stores. Asked for money at the corner of Fifty-seventh Street by a crippled child as surely doomed as Tiny Tim Cratchit, Scrooge rebukes the waif for its insolence and kicks away its crutch. ■

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STOLICHNAYA
IMPORTED FROM RUSSIA
Stolichnaya vodka
RUSSIAN VODKA

HARPER'S INDEX

Amount the U.S. government budgeted this year for aid to U.S. workers laid off as a result of NAFTA : $43,400,000
Number of workers approved for such aid this year : 42,172
Number of these who are "indigenous crafts" workers in El Paso : 26
Estimated portion of all U.S. layoffs announced last summer that were the result of a merger : 1/3
Average percentage change in the GDP in a year preceding a presidential incumbent's re-election, since 1950 : +4.1
Average percentage change in the GDP in a year preceding a presidential incumbent's losing re-election : +0.95
Ratio of Republicans to Democrats elected president since 1900 who lost their bid for re-election : 4:1
Ratio of Republican to Democratic presidential vetoes overridden by Congress since 1960 : 14:1
Average number of books signed per minute by Newt Gingrich at a Boston bookstore in August : 4
Average number signed per minute by Colin Powell at the same store in September : 11
Number of stories about Hillary Clinton's attendance of the U.N.'s women's conference that appeared on Chinese TV : 0
Amount by which sales of the Unabomber issue of the *Washington Post* exceeded average daily sales : 16,000
Amount by which the Beatles outearned the Rolling Stones last year : $9,000,000
Price of a sheet of "undipped" blotter-acid art signed by Timothy Leary, from San Francisco's ArtRock Gallery : $225
Percentage of Americans convicted on federal drug charges in 1991 who turned informant to reduce their sentence : 19
Percentage of those convicted last year who did so : 37
Chances that an applicant to a U.S. police force in 1992 was found to be "overly aggressive" on psychological tests : 1 in 2
Number of Philadelphia criminal convictions overturned this year because of police misconduct : 55
Estimated number of such cases still pending : 1,200
Percentage change since 1990 in hours of counseling required by L.A. police employees and their families : +96
Number of Harvard Law students required to read *Juice: The O. J. Simpson Tragedy* last year : 550
Federal grant made to Cornell University last July to create an "O. J. Simpson Trial Archive" : $17,000
Attendance at a one-day job fair held in Newark, New Jersey, last August to fill 130 teaching positions : 1,400
Chances that an unemployed American worker receives unemployment benefits : 1 in 3
Number of French job-seekers whose résumés were printed on wine bottles by local vintners last spring : 1,000
Gallons of red wine the city of Stockholm purchased this year for conversion into ethanol to fuel its public buses : 750,000
Estimated amount of gasoline wasted in U.S. traffic jams each day, in gallons : 12,600,000
Number of *Exxon Valdez* spills it would take to equal the amount of oil spilled into the Mediterranean Sea each year : 17
Amount insurers paid to victims of climate-related disasters each day during the 1980s, worldwide : $8,000,000
Amount paid such victims each day last year : $27,400,000
Size of an iceberg that separated from Antarctica last January, in ice cubes : 70,000,000,000,000,000
Price of a two-day course in igloo building at the University of Calgary : $50
Fee charged by a California design firm to place a string of lights on an outdoor Christmas tree, lights not included : $75
Ratio of the voltage of fences proposed for Alabama's high-security prisons to that of an electric chair : 5:2
Minutes after an Oklahoma prisoner was released from the hospital for a drug overdose that he was executed : 40
Gross revenue earned by U.S. telephone companies last year from phone calls made by prisoners : $1,000,000,000
Ratio of Americans who worry "a lot" about money and health insurance to those who worry about going to hell : 5:1
Rank of God among those first publicly thanked by Johnnie Cochran after the Simpson verdict was delivered in October : 1
Number of California driver's licenses made out to Jesus Christ : 6
Number made out to Jesus Christ II : 1

Figures cited are the latest available as of October 1995. Sources are listed on page 63.
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"It's a really big small car, if you know what I mean."

Okay, so you can't afford the most expensive car on the road; that's life. But to think you have to spend thirty grand to feel safe, well, that's not only crazy, it's downright scary. ↳ So, when we sat down to design the new Saturns, we decided right off the bat that both our new wagon and sedan would meet all the new side-impact safety standards. Oh, not the rigid 1996 standards, mind you, but the even tougher 1997 standards; today, now, right this very second. ↳ And speaking of right now, in Spring Hill, at the Saturn plant, team members are building these new sedans and wagons with front and rear crumple zones and installing dual airbags and height-adjustable front seatbelts. And, oh yes, they're building all of this around an impact-tested, robot-welded high-tensile-strength steel spaceframe. All to help protect you and yours. ↳ Which may explain why, after seeing countless examples of how different cars perform safety-wise, insurance agent and family man Mark Jacobs bought a Saturn. Guess you could say he's big on us. If you know what we mean.

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READINGS

[Proposal]

BLACK JURORS: RIGHT TO ACQUIT?

Adapted from "Racially Based Jury Nullification: Black Power in the Criminal Justice System," by Paul Butler, in the December issue of The Yale Law Journal. *Butler is an associate professor at the George Washington University Law School.*

In 1990 I was a Special Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia. I prosecuted people accused of misdemeanor crimes, mainly the drug and gun cases that overwhelm the local courts of most American cities. As a federal prosecutor, I represented the United States of America and used that power to put people, mainly African-American men, in prison. I am also an African-American man. During that time, I made two discoveries that profoundly changed the way I viewed my work as a prosecutor and my responsibilities as a black person.

The first discovery occurred during a training session for new assistants conducted by experienced prosecutors. We rookies were informed that we would lose many of our cases, despite having persuaded a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was guilty. We would lose because some black jurors would refuse to convict black defendants who they knew were guilty.

The second discovery was related to the first but was even more unsettling. It occurred during the trial of Marion Barry, then the second-term mayor of the District of Columbia. Barry was being prosecuted by my office for drug possession and perjury. I learned, to my surprise, that some of my fellow African-American prosecutors hoped that the mayor would be acquitted, despite the fact that he was obviously guilty of at least one of the charges—an FBI videotape plainly showed him smoking crack cocaine. These black prosecutors wanted their office to lose its case because they believed that the prosecution of Barry was racist.

There is an increasing perception that some African-American jurors vote to acquit black defendants for racial reasons, sometimes explained as the juror's desire not to send another black man to jail. There is considerable disagreement over whether it is appropriate for a black juror to do so. I now believe that, for pragmatic and political reasons, the black community is better off when some non-violent lawbreakers remain in the community rather than go to prison. The decision as to what kind of conduct by African Americans ought to be punished is better made by African Americans, based on their understanding of the costs and benefits to their community, than by the traditional criminal justice process, which is controlled by white lawmakers and white law enforcers. Legally, African-American jurors who sit in judgment of African-American accused persons have the power to make that decision. Considering the costs of law enforcement to the black community, and the failure of white lawmakers to come up with any solutions to black antisocial conduct other than incarceration, it is, in fact, the moral responsibility of black jurors to emancipate some guilty black outlaws.

Why would a black juror vote to let a guilty person go free? Assuming the juror is a rational, self-interested actor, she must believe

that she is better off with the defendant out of prison than in prison. But how could any rational person believe that about a criminal?

Imagine a country in which a third of the young male citizens are under the supervision of the criminal justice system—either awaiting trial, in prison, or on probation or parole. Imagine a country in which two-thirds of the men can anticipate being arrested before they reach age thirty. Imagine a country in which there are more young men in prison than in college.

The country imagined above is a police state. When we think of a police state, we think of a society whose fundamental problem lies not with the citizens of the state but rather with the form of government, and with the powerful elites in whose interest the state exists. Similarly, racial critics of American criminal justice locate the problem not with the black prisoners but with the state and its actors and beneficiaries.

The black community also bears very real costs by having so many African Americans, particularly males, incarcerated or otherwise involved in the criminal justice system. These costs are both social and economic, and they include the large percentage of black children who live in female-headed, single-parent households; a perceived dearth of men "eligible" for marriage; the lack of male role models for black children, especially boys; the absence of wealth in the black community; and the large unemployment rate among black men.

According to a recent *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup poll, 66 percent of blacks believe that the criminal justice system is racist and only 32 percent believe it is not racist. Interestingly, other polls suggest that blacks also tend to be more worried about crime than whites; this seems logical when one considers that blacks are more likely to be victims of crime. This enhanced concern, however, does not appear to translate to black support for tougher enforcement of criminal law. For example, substantially fewer blacks than whites support the death penalty, and many more blacks than whites were concerned with the potential racial consequences of the strict provisions of last year's crime bill. Along with significant evidence from popular culture, these polls suggest that a substantial portion of the African-American community sympathizes with racial critiques of the criminal justice system.

African-American jurors who endorse these critiques are in a unique position to act on their beliefs when they sit in judgment of a black defendant. As jurors, they have the power to convict the accused person or to set him free. May the responsible exercise of that power include voting to free a black defendant who the juror believes is guilty? The answer is "yes," based on the legal doctrine known as jury nullification.

Jury nullification occurs when a jury acquits a defendant who it believes is guilty of the crime with which he is charged. In finding the defen-

[Threats]

PARTY UNITY, NEWT'S WAY

From a September 26 computer-mail message to House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R., Tex.) from Ralph Hellman, one of DeLay's aides, summarizing a meeting at which House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other Republican leaders discussed ways to win passage of a GOP-sponsored farm bill. The bill, which would cut $13.4 billion from federal farm programs, had been blocked in the House Agriculture Committee after three Republicans—Larry Combest of Texas, Richard Baker of Louisiana, and Bill Emerson of Missouri—joined Democrats in voting against it. The computer message was inadvertently sent to a Democratic congressional office, then circulated widely in the Capitol.

After you left the meeting on Friday, a variety of decisions were made.

[Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat] Roberts [R., Kan.]: He wants the bill to go to Budget in case he can't get Combest, Baker, and Emerson to support him. Roberts is worried that we end up screwing our freshmen on the committee if we give in to Combest, Emerson, and Baker.

Newt: These guys are not outlaws. We were in these guys' shoes when [former House Republican leader Bob] Michel ran the place. They need to be told that they matter.

Newt then proceeded to issue threats that he can use:

1. Baker will be taken off [Agriculture] and put on Transportation.

2. Emerson will not become chairman [of the Agriculture Committee] if Roberts runs for the Senate.

3. Combest will be stripped of Intelligence Committee chairmanship.

The meeting ended without any real decision except to let Roberts continue to massage, cajole, and threaten his committee into action. I'll keep you posted.



Gegenüberstellung (Confrontation)," two portraits of Gudrun Ensslin, a leader of the Baader-Meinhof gang, a West German terrorist roup. The portraits are part of 18. October 1977, *a series of oil paintings by Gerhard Richter, a German artist, currently on display at the rael Museum in Jerusalem. In April 1977, after the longest trial in West German history, Ensslin and two other members of the Baader-leinhof group were sentenced to life imprisonment for bomb attacks on U.S. bases in Germany in which four soldiers were killed. On Octo-r 13 of that year, a group of terrorists hijacked a Lufthansa jet, demanding the release of Ensslin and the other Baader-Meinhof leaders. On)ctober 18, West German commandos stormed the jet, freeing the passengers and killing three of the four hijackers. Hours later, Ensslin and e other leaders were found dead in their cells. Prison authorities claimed that they had committed suicide, but government critics claimed that ey had been murdered. The paintings above portray Ensslin under arrest. Richter lives in Cologne, Germany.*

dant not guilty, the jury ignores the facts of the case and/or the judge's instructions regarding the law. Instead, the jury votes its conscience.

The prerogative of juries to nullify has been part of English and American law for centuries. There are well-known cases from the Revolutionary War era when American patriots were charged with political crimes by the British crown and acquitted by American juries. Black slaves who escaped to the North and were prosecuted for violation of the Fugitive Slave Law were freed by Northern juries with abolitionist sentiments. Some Southern juries refused to punish white violence against African Americans, especially black men accused of crimes against white women.

The Supreme Court has officially disapproved of jury nullification but has conceded that it has no power to prohibit jurors from engaging in it; the Bill of Rights does not allow verdicts of acquittal to be reversed, regardless of the reason for the acquittal. Criticism of nullification has centered on its potential for abuse. The criticism suggests that when twelve members of a jury vote their conscience instead of the law, they corrupt the rule of law and undermine the democratic principles that made the law.

There is no question that jury nullification is subversive of the rule of law. Nonetheless, most legal historians agree that it was morally appropriate in the cases of the white American revolutionaries and the runaway slaves. The issue, then, is whether African Americans today have the moral right to engage in this same subversion.

Most moral justifications of the obligation to obey the law are based on theories of "fair play." Citizens benefit from the rule of law; that is why it is just that they are burdened with the requirement to follow it. Yet most blacks are aware of countless historical examples in which African Americans were not afforded the benefit of the rule of law: think, for example, of the existence of slavery in a republic purportedly dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, or the law's support of state-sponsored segregation even after the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed blacks equal protection. That the rule of law ultimately corrected some of the large holes in the American fabric is evidence

more of its malleability than its goodness; the rule of law previously had justified the holes.

If the rule of law is a myth, or at least not valid for African Americans, the argument that jury nullification undermines it loses force. The black juror is simply another actor in the system, using her power to fashion a particular outcome. The juror's act of nullification—like the act of the citizen who dials 911 to report Ricky but not Bob, or the police officer who arrests Lisa but not Mary, or the prosecutor who charges Kwame but not Brad, or the judge who finds that Nancy was illegally entrapped but Verna was not—exposes the indeterminacy of law but does not in itself create it.

A similar argument can be made regarding the criticism that jury nullification is anti-democratic. This is precisely why many African Americans endorse it; it is perhaps the only legal power black people have to escape the tyranny of the majority. Black people have had to beg white decision makers for most of the rights they have: the right not to be slaves, the right to vote, the right to attend an integrated school. Now black people are begging white people to preserve programs that help black children to eat and black businesses to survive. Jury nullification affords African Americans the power to determine justice for themselves in individual cases, regardless of whether white people agree or even understand.

At this point, African Americans should ask themselves whether the operation of the criminal law system in the United States advances the interests of black people. If it does not, the doctrine of jury nullification affords African-American jurors the opportunity to exercise the authority of the law over some African-American criminal defendants. In essence, black people can "opt out" of American criminal law.

How far should they go—completely to anarchy, or is there someplace between here and there that is safer than both? I propose the following: African-American jurors should approach their work cognizant of its political nature and of their prerogative to exercise their power in the best interests of the black community. In every case, the juror should be guided by her view of what is "just." (I have more faith, I should add, in the average black juror's idea of justice than I do in the idea that is embodied in the "rule of law.")

In cases involving violent *malum in se* (inherently bad) crimes, such as murder, rape, and assault, jurors should consider the case strictly on the evidence presented, and if they believe the accused person is guilty, they should so vote. In cases involving non-violent, *malum prohibitum* (legally proscribed) offenses, including "victimless" crimes such as narcotics possession, there should be a presumption in favor of nullification. Finally, for non-violent, *malum in se* crimes, such as theft or perjury, there need be no presumption in favor of nullification, but it ought to be an option the juror considers. A juror might vote for

[Findings]

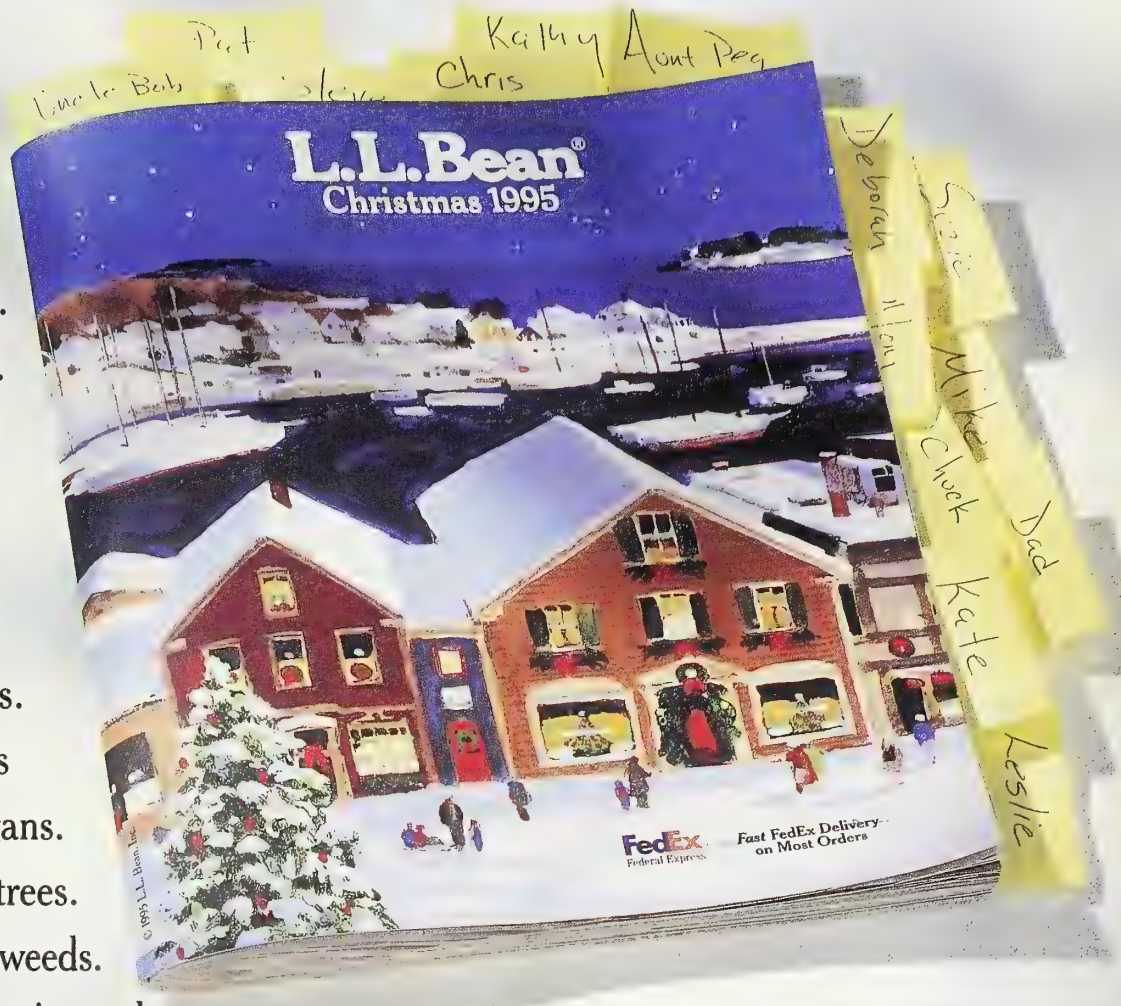
MANAGED CARE: THE DOCTOR IS ILL

From "Hassle Hypertension: A Risk of Managed Care," a letter to the editor by Dr. William R. Phillips, in the September 13 Journal of the American Medical Association. *Phillips is a physician at Northwest Family Medicine in Seattle; he sees patients from seventeen different health plans.*

A forty-four-year-old primary care physician [the author] complained of feeling stressed by telephone calls to managed-care plans to request authorization for services needed by his patients. These telephone calls often required interruptions of patient care lasting ten to twenty minutes in the midst of busy days in the office. He noted tachycardia, feeling flushed, and the need to suppress frustration and anger. To assess the effect of this stress, his nurse recorded his blood pressure regularly for one month, during daily patient care and immediately following telephone calls dealing with managed-care issues. The physician's mean daily blood pressure was 139 over 80. His blood pressure increased after managed-care telephone calls to an average of 154 over 95, a reading that indicates a diagnosis of hypertension and that, if sustained, would indicate the need for treatment to avoid the associated morbidity and mortality. These elevations were not noted during other professional activities, including office surgery, assisting at major surgery, classroom lectures, and telephone calls to medical consultants. Blood pressure elevations were more marked with certain plans. This physician has since developed hypertension requiring drug treatment.

The association of physician hypertension with the managed-care hassle factor, although documented in only a single case, is consistent with widespread anecdotal reports. The contribution of managed care to hypertension deserves further study.

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equivalent. For example, when a poor woman steals from Tiffany's but not when the same woman steals from her next-door neighbor.

How would a juror decide individual cases under my proposal? Easy cases would include a defendant who has possessed crack cocaine and an abusive husband who kills his wife. The former should be acquitted and the latter should go to prison.

Difficult scenarios would include the drug dealer who operates in the ghetto and the thief who burglarizes the home of a rich white family. Under my proposal, nullification is presumed in the first case because drug distribution is a non-violent *malum prohibitum* offense. Is nullification morally justifiable here? It depends. There is no question that encouraging people to engage in self-destructive behavior is evil; the question the juror should ask herself is whether the remedy is less evil. (The juror should also remember that the criminal law does not punish those ghetto drug dealers who cause the most injury: liquor store owners.)

As for the burglar who steals from the rich white family, the case is troubling, first of all, because the conduct is so clearly "wrong." Since it is a non-violent *malum in se* crime, there is no presumption in favor of nullification, but it is an option for consideration. Here again, the facts of the case are relevant. For example, if the offense was committed to support a drug habit, I think there is a moral case to be made for nullification, at least until such time as access to drug-rehabilitation services are available to all.

Why would a juror be inclined to follow my proposal? There is no guarantee that she would. But when we perceive that black jurors are already nullifying on the basis of racial critiques (i.e., refusing to send another black man to jail), we recognize that these jurors are willing to use their power in a politically conscious manner. Further, it appears that some black jurors now excuse some conduct—like murder—that they should not excuse. My proposal provides a principled structure for the exercise of the black juror's vote. I am not encouraging anarchy; rather I am reminding black jurors of their privilege to serve a calling higher than law: justice.

I concede that the justice my proposal achieves is rough. It is as susceptible to human foibles as the jury system. But I am sufficiently optimistic that my proposal will be only an intermediate plan, a stopping point between the status quo and real justice. To get to that better, middle ground, I hope that this essay will encourage African Americans to use responsibly the power they already have.



From The New American Ghetto, *by Camilo José Vergara, published by Rutgers University Press. The book chronicles the changes in the ghettos of American cities since 1977. This photograph shows the entrance to an abandoned fur salon on Chicago's West Side. Vergara, a sociologist, lives in New York City.*

[Reflections]

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE AGE OF PROZAC

From interviews with Christians who take Prozac and other antidepressants, conducted by Clark E. Barshinger, Lojan E. LaRowe, and Andrés T. Tapia for their article "The Gospel According to Prozac," which appeared in the August 14 issue of Christianity Today. *Barshinger and LaRowe are psychotherapists in Lake Zurich, Illinois; Tapia is an associate editor for the Pacific News Service.*

COURTNEY SELLERS

As I struggled with deep-seated depression, my Christian friends would tell me that all I had to do was "trust in the Lord" and everything would be all right. Well, I trusted and trusted and I still



From a series of sculptures by Laura Harling, an artist who works as a janitor for the state of California, cleaning government buildings in Sacramento. On the left is former California governor Jerry Brown (whose apartment Harling once cleaned), and on the right is former California Speaker of the Assembly Willie Brown Jr. Harling's sculptures were featured in the September 24 issue of the Sacramento Bee.

felt miserable. Everywhere I went I thought people were staring at me. I would wake up at 4:00 A.M., look in the mirror, and pull at my skin, obsessing about how ugly I felt. Meanwhile, my family life was falling apart. Our marriage was under a great strain, and my husband had to take on most of the housework and child care.

When we started to consider getting me on Prozac, our fundamentalist Christian friends objected quite strongly. They argued that the real problem was that I was getting too self-involved, that I needed to focus on others and on my housework, and that this would surely help me "snap out of it." They contended that what we needed was God's word, because emotional problems are really spiritual problems. To them, psychotherapy could only lead to worship of the self.

Against their advice, I checked myself into a mental health clinic, one that was run by Christians who obviously had a less restricted view of therapy and medication. They put me on Prozac right away. Within two weeks I felt my whole life turn around.

As my husband and I watched the results of Prozac, we knew that the medication was God's gift to us. Breakthroughs in science, including things like Prozac, are evidence of his grace. Now, because I have more energy, I can serve others and in so doing practice the religion I believe in. Though I have been a Christian all my life, I now *feel* God's love for me as I never have before.

FRANCISCO MORALES

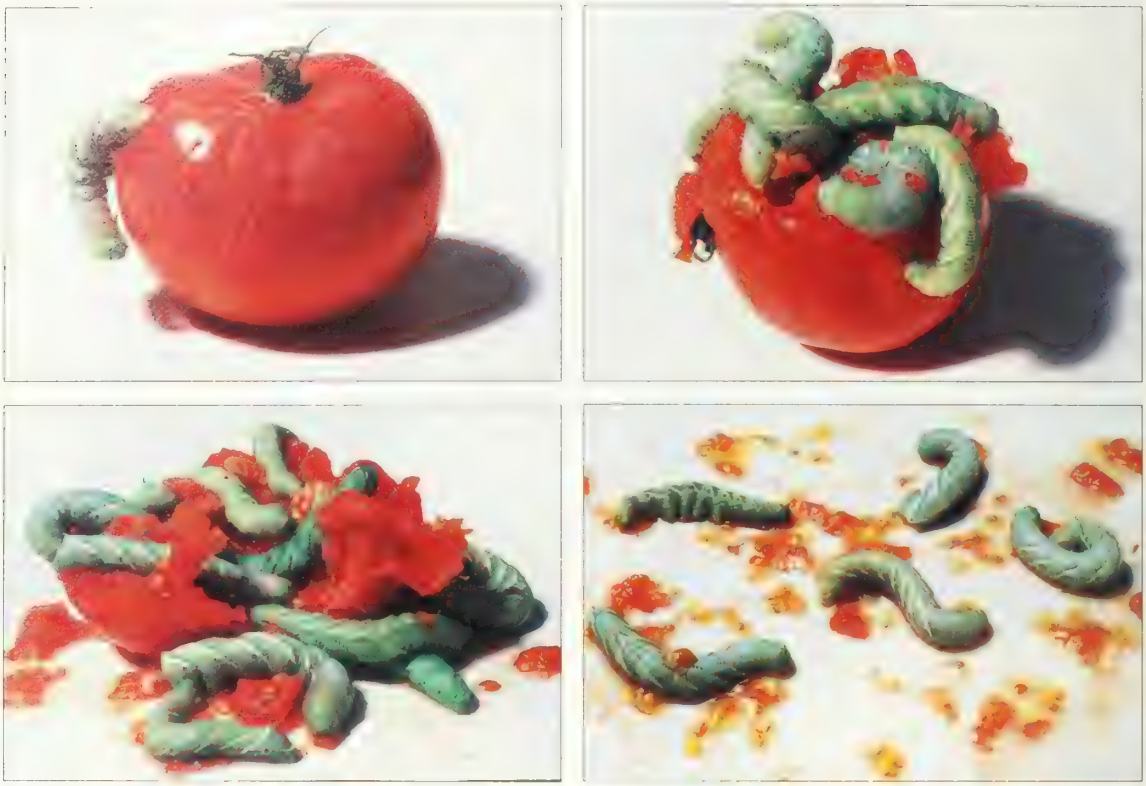
Before I started taking Zoloft, I obsessed about being perfect. Whenever I sinned, I couldn't shake my obsession with how bad I was and how it was up to me to forgive myself. Of course, I couldn't forgive myself, and I always ended up trapped in feelings of guilt and anger. Once I started taking Zoloft, I found that I could simply accept that I was not perfect. I was at peace with my sinfulness and accepted the fact that only God could save me.

On the other hand, living without obsessive-compulsive disorder has lowered my drive to deal with my sins. I've become almost too comfortable with my sinfulness. I now realize that before Zoloft, much of my motivation to follow Christ came from a desperation to feel good about myself. I've had to ask myself, Why am I a Christian? If I can feel good without God, why follow him?

I've concluded that I want to follow him be-

[Photographs]

THE HUNGER



From "Caterpillars eating a tomato," a series of photographs by Catherine Chalmers that appeared in the Spring/Summer issue of Blind Spot. *Chalmers raises a variety of animals, vegetables, and insects in her New York City studio, and takes photographs of them to illustrate the stages of the food chain. For the project excerpted above, Chalmers first photographed caterpillars eating a tomato, then praying mantises eating the caterpillars, and finally tarantulas and frogs eating the praying mantises. Currently she is working on a series of photographs of her mice giving birth, and the babies then being eaten by various predators.*

cause I love him, not because of what he can do for me. In that way, Zoloft has helped me achieve a more mature view of my Christian walk.

SYLVIA SWANSON

Before Prozac, I always needed someone in authority to tell me what to do. Religion—the rules and expectations of spirituality—gave me an external structure to compensate for my lack of internal stability. But I frequently faked my spirituality. I seemed to be doing great on the outside, but inside I felt like life was not worth living, and I resented God for it.

God used Prozac to change my life. But as the fog of my severe depression lifted, I started making independent choices that did not always meet with approval in my church. For example, now I don't go to church every Sunday. I used to never miss a single service, not because of a true desire to be with God but because of my fear of others' disapproval. Now I go because I truly desire to be in God's presence. I really don't care about the rules, the dos and don'ts, who's in, who's out, or all the theological positions people love to feel self-righteous about. I'm discovering that I need God himself, not all that other stuff, which means that I'm starting to see God in places other than church—in music, or in a mosque, or in a homeless woman panhandling on the corner.

Before Prozac, my relationship with God felt like an arranged marriage. Now I have to decide if I want to spend the rest of my life in a relationship with this person. I'm testing him. How far can I go? Am I a Christian? Is Christianity true? I never asked these questions before—the possible answers were too scary. Because Prozac has given me the freedom to ask these questions, I believe that it is helping me be more true to the person God created me to be. Still, sometimes I get afraid that I might stray too far from the path and that God won't take me back.

[Interview]

DIET TIPS FROM THE BARBI TWINS

From an interview with Shane and Sia Barbi, the models known as the Barbi Twins, in the Fall issue of bOING bOING, *published in Los Angeles. The Barbi Twins have been featured in pinup calendars,* Playboy *spreads, and the comic book and CD-ROM* The Barbi Twins Adventures. *They are "recovered bulimics"; each is 5'9" and weighs 115 pounds. The interview was conducted by Matt Maranian.*

MATT: When did you start using laxatives?

SHANE: We discovered laxatives in Paris when we were modeling for Thierry Mugler in the fashion shows. We starved for weeks, and then after the fashion shows we binged. I got a chronic case of constipation, so the doctor gave me laxatives, and I lost so much I thought, "Whoa! This is a good thing!"

MATT: When did you stop using them?

SIA: When they stopped working. When I was on the floor with froth coming out of my mouth.

SHANE: It was scary. She had bubbles coming out of her mouth, and we had to take her to the hospital. As long as we were losing fifty pounds, we didn't care if we died.

SIA: The doctor said, "That's it. If you do this one more time you'll go into cardiac arrest," and I said, "Are you sure I can't do it just *one* more time?"

SHANE: And in all other areas we were "natural" fanatics—no drugs, no aspirin. We don't smoke, we don't drink liquor. No coffee, even.

SIA: I wouldn't even allow X rays on my teeth. So it was strange for us that we went from natural laxatives—

SHANE: To dynamite: one hundred Dulcolax. Karen Carpenter died from less than that.

MATT: Which was your favorite laxative?

SHANE: Magnesium Xytrate was the strongest, but Dulcolax works the best. In four hours we could be fifteen pounds thinner. Even my hands were thin.

SIA: People would say, "Gosh, you look terrible. What's wrong?" And we would say, "Thank you!"

MATT: What's the greatest extreme you've ever gone to to lose weight?

SHANE: We actually rented an apartment in Austin, Texas. It was like going to a fasting farm, but we wanted to lock ourselves in. We had this idea that we were going to be locked up for forty days and forty nights. We wanted to be spiritual, and in the Bible it says forty days and forty nights.

SIA: I wanted to see visions.

SHANE: We had gallons and gallons of water, that's it. Nothing in the refrigerator. We asked this poor guy to lock us in, and we purposely got a third-story apartment so we couldn't get out. I wanted to be skinny.

MATT: How much did you weigh when you went in?

SHANE: 145 to 150, which is basically the weight we've been for almost all our pictures. So there we were, and after the fourth or fifth day you lose desire for *everything*.

SIA: You lose morals, too. I would have hooked for food at that point.

SHANE: We practically killed each other. You can smell everything. I could smell if someone put butter on a potato next door. Then finally we got so crazy—

MATT: After how many days?

SHANE: Only ten.

MATT: You lasted ten days?

SIA: I've lasted nineteen days at a fasting hygienic center.

SHANE: So we finally had to get out and get to a 7-Eleven. But we didn't have the strength to

[Menu]

ICEBERG LETTUCE: THE SALAD DAYS

From a list of "gourmet" dishes served at the Iceberg Lettuce Centenary in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, last year. The dishes, prepared by Washington, D.C., chef Miryana Navarro-Monzo, all have iceberg lettuce as a primary ingredient. The event was sponsored by W. Atlee Burpee & Co. in order to improve the public perception of iceberg lettuce, which the company calls "possibly the most maligned and unappreciated item of produce on the greengrocer's shelf."

ICEBERG GAZPACHO MULTICOLOR

CREME DE LA CREME ICEBERG SOUP WITH MINT

GOLDEN ICEBERG SLAW WITH BASIL

ICEBERG LETTUCE WRAPPETTES WITH SAGE

LIGHT ICEBERG LETTUCE LATKES WITH CHIVES

ICEBERG BLT A LA PIZZAIOLA WITH ORIGANUM (MADE WITH ICEBERG-LETTUCE DOUGH)

DAINTY ICEBERG CREPES WITH ROSEMARY

SWEET EMERALD ICEBERG SORBET WITH GARNETS

bust down the door. So we tied bedsheets together to climb out the window, which we must have learned from a cartoon.

MATT: You couldn't call someone?

SIA: No. We purposely didn't have a phone or we'd have had pizzas sent. So we got to the 7-Eleven and we were like drug addicts, eating right there out of the packages. We paid for empty wrappers.

SHANE: And we had a sugar buzz! It was like we were on speed.

SIA: Our eyes dilated. We could have run a marathon.

SHANE: We had so much energy. But our low was horrible. We hated ourselves for breaking our word.

MATT: How damaging do you think your image is to our appearance-obsessed culture?

SIA: I'm sure that there are a lot of women who say we contribute to it. I feel that I was as much a victim as anyone else. But I learned from my therapy not to blame but to become a part of the solution. We're all victims. The dysfunctional part of me was working with the dysfunctional part of the media that was dealing with surface obsessions.

SHANE: (*clapping*) I'm just drawing blanks here.

SIA: Unlike other models who say, "Oh yes, I eat anything I want and I'm beautiful, and you aren't"—almost every model says that, and I think it's bull—at least I'm honest enough to say I'm no different than you. I got my stuff together and what I did is package myself. My package is what you're looking at, and I make a living off of it. That's it. Sometimes feminists attack us, but I don't think a true feminist should attack another woman. We should all work together.

[Census]

ON-LINE AMERICA'S TRUE HOBBIES

From "Love, Sex, & Power on the Cyber Frontier," by Perry Glasser, in the September/October issue of The North American Review. *Glasser recorded the number of people logged into various "chat rooms" on Prodigy and America Online on a weekday evening around 8:00 P.M. Each room can hold a maximum of twenty-five users.*

ROOMS CREATED BY AMERICA ONLINE OR PRODIGY

Room Name	*Members Present*
Chess	0
Broadway	0
Model Railroading	0
Photography	1
Family Travel	2
Soap Operas	2
Quilting	2

ROOMS CREATED BY USERS

Room Name	*Members Present*
Shareyourwifew/me	14
NYC Dungeon	15
Hot W Needs Knight	20
Men's Locker Room	22
Married and Flirting	25
ULookPrettyTiedUp	25
Do Me Quick	25

[FAQ File]

THE INTERNET GETS WARM AND FUZZY

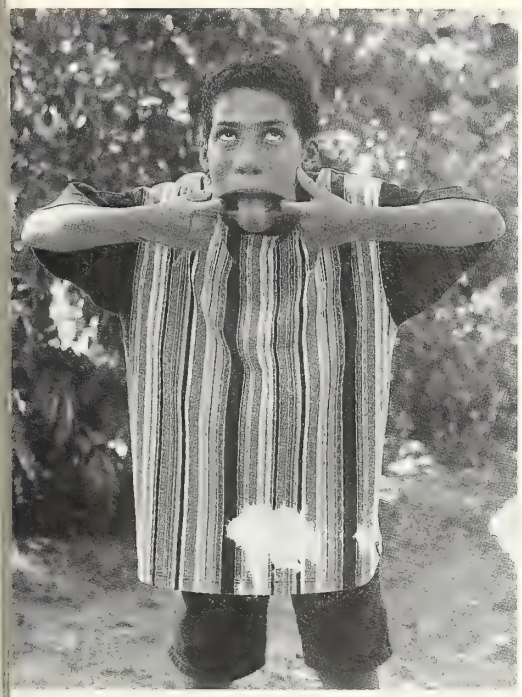
From the Frequently Asked Questions file for alt.cuddle, an Internet newsgroup on which readers discuss "cuddling, hugging, huggling, and all forms of friendly affection."

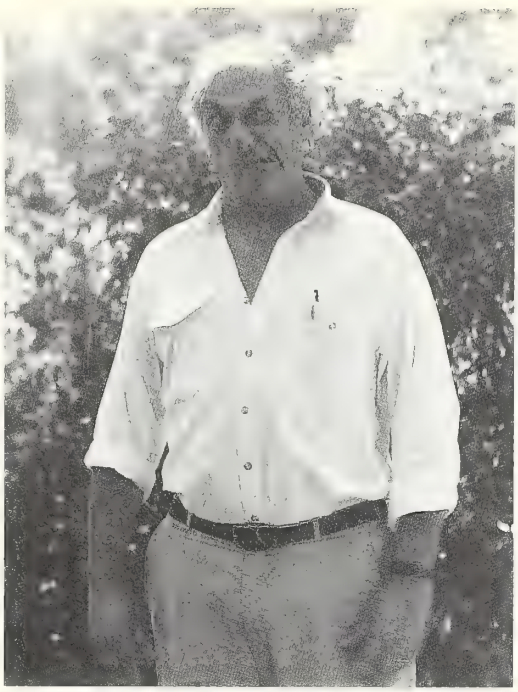
Hello there, and welcome to CuddleLand! CuddleLand (alt.cuddle) is a highly affectionate, caring, and cuddly newsgroup that acts as a support group for people who need a cuddle, for whatever reason. Some people want one because they're feeling low. Others want one because they're feeling good. Still others want one because they like a good cuddle, however they feel. On this group, all you have to do is ask.

In CuddleLand we partake of tickle attacks, pillow fights, wonderful little ambush hug attacks, and Princesses *POOF!*ing right next to you, handing out cookies, hugs, and snuggles. Newcomers are usually treated to a Newbie Cuddle, in which they get *massaged* *tickled* *fuzzied* and *great big tigger cuddles that make you never want to let go*.

As you can see, CuddleLand is always a happy, friendly, and warm place, and, of course, we would love to keep it that way. We have a few simple guidelines that we all must follow so that everyone can bask in the warmth of cuddles:

1. Some of the approved ways of giving electronic affection are as follows: *cuddle* *hug* *snuggle* *tickle* *wave* *smile* *hugga* *nuzzle* *huggle* *schnuzzle*.





From a series of photographs taken last summer in New York City's Central Park by Oded Zeldin, a New York photographer. Zeldin asked passersby to strike a "silly pose" in exchange for a copy of the resulting photograph. Zeldin's work is currently on display at the 123 Watts Gallery in New York City.

2. *kisses on the cheek* *holding hands* *backrubs* *massages* etc. are always welcomed and encouraged.

3. *kisses* *smooches* *caresses* etc. are getting very affectionate and can possibly offend. Use your discretion when cuddling. Everyone has a "personal space," and sometimes a little innocent flirting can be taken the wrong way. If the other person starts to back off, respect that.

4. No disdainful, spiteful, or malicious postings. Since the group is here to discuss and give Virtual Hugs and Cuddles, posts that express disdain for this will generally be ignored.

5. No "what women/men want"–type posts. These subjects have been talked to death and are still being discussed in alt.romance. Please go there for conversations of that nature.

6. No stories that would be better posted in alt.sex.stories. CuddleLand is (mostly) nonsexual. Blatant sex stories have no place here.

7. Do NOT criticize or "flame" someone for making a mistake. We're all very friendly here. Don't get into petty personal put-downs. We forgive, and then cuddle.

CUDDLELAND'S SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

The Grand Order of the Knights in Tarnished Armor. Knights in Tarnished Armor (KiTAs) are the protectors of CuddleLand. Once someone is appointed to the position of KiTA by the Cuddle Royalty, it is his or her duty to go forth and cuddle all. Most KiTAs are presented with some sort of "weapon" for the spreading of happiness and joy to everyone. Generally a Fuzzy Tickle Sword is given, but there have also been Fuzzy Bombs and Fuzzy Maces.

The Universal Church of Cuddle (UCC). The members of UCC are the shock troops of cuddledom. The church is headed by Rick Jensen, who is the High Grand Pooh-Bear. He fixes broken hearts. Other members include Bill Bacon, the Translator of *The Ancient Book of Cuddle*, and Deby Gensler, the Koalamatician. Anyone can be a member, as long as you believe in your heart that you can go forth and cuddle-ply.

Inspirational Items. There is a section in the cuddle home pages that contains some of the happiest and saddest moments of alt.cuddle, all of which will bring a tear to your eye, a smile to your face, or a thought to your mind. These items include poetry, songs, ASCII art, Pooky Cuddles, Princess Judy Snuggles, Cuddle Bondage, Cuddle Slaves, the Cuddle Cam, the Mysteries of Licorice, Sir Thumper and Princess Angela's ambush hugs, Newbie Postings, Pooky Suits, and the Learning to Hug series. Coming soon: the Tower Rescue and Pooky Snacks!

[Artifacts]

CASUALTIES OF PROGRESS

From the "master-list of extinct forms of media" being compiled as part of the Dead Media Project. The project was launched last summer by science fiction writers Bruce Sterling and Richard Kadrey; it is now being pursued by a loosely organized group of writers, scientists, and researchers who communicate over the Internet. In a speech in September to the International Symposium on Electronic Art, Sterling explained that the project grew out of his desire to "destroy the Whig version of technological history" in which "all technological developments have marched in progressive lockstep, from height to height, to produce the current exalted media landscape." The project catalogues what Sterling calls "the arcane, the offbeat, the forgotten. The failures, the lost and the buried, the media-maudit."

Prehistoric etched-bone mnemonic devices
Alpenhorn networks
Pigeon post
Mongol imperial horse post
Roman imperial semaphore
The Thurn und Taxis private mail system
Paris Commune balloon mail
Chinese kite messages
Inca knotted cord "quipu"
Wampum
Soemmering's electrolytic bubble-letter telegraph
Pneumatic transfer tubes
Giovanni Caselli's facsimile pantelegraph
The Edison wax cylinder
The heliograph
The teleharmonium
Early twentieth-century electric searchlight spectacles
The various species of magic lantern, including Alhazen's camera obscura, Joseph Plateau's phenakistiscope, William George Horner's zoetrope or "wheel-of-life"
The stereopticon
Primitive cinema devices, including Muybridge's zoogyroscope, Gaumont's Chronophone, Edison's kinetophone, the synchronoscope, the movietone, phonofilm, the graphophonoscope, the vitaphone
Telex
Hollywood innovations: Cinerama, CinemaScope, Natural Vision, Odorama
Video formats: PixelVision, Polavision, Laservision, betamax
Skywriting
78-rpm records
8-track tapes
Colecovision
Intellivision
Teddy Ruxpin
The Altair 8800, Amiga 500, Apple I, II, IIc, IIe, II+, IIgs, III, Apple Lisa, Apple Lisa MacXL, Commodore C64, Commodore Pet, IBM XT, IBM Portable, IBM PCjr, Intertek Superbrain II, Kaypro 2x, Osborne 1, Tandy 1000, Tandy 1000SL, TRS-80, and hundreds of other personal computers

[Essay]

MONOGAMY AND ITS PERILS

From "Marriage and Its Dilemmas," by Gerald Early, in the Fall issue of Hungry Mind Review. *Early, director of African and Afro-American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, is the author, most recently, of* One Nation Under a Groove: Motown and American Culture. *His essay "Their Malcolm, My Problem" appeared in the December 1992 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

"When you get married," an adult male friend told me when I was a teenager, "don't think about it. Don't think about being married. Just go through it day by day. If you think about it, you won't want to stay married." There was not, as I remember, a single successful marriage among any of my relatives during the years I lived with them. Perhaps they thought about the matter too much.

When I did marry I told this friend, a few days after the ceremony, that I wanted to be a very good husband, the best husband possible. He smiled. "Remember this: don't let your wife know your business," he said. "And you'll never be as good as you think you will be. You'll be as good as what you can live with." And, I suppose, as good as what she can live with as well.

Six years later, when I stood before my wife as the unfaithful husband, in something of the manner of a condemned prisoner, I realized that at that moment she hated me with as much sheer ferocity as she had probably hated anyone in her life.

There was, perversely, an ego affirmation in this, if only because it takes some degree of notice, even significance, to be worthy of hatred. But her loathing was more troubling than affirming: this was what I had always dreaded our relationship would amount to, in the end. Not the gradual, measured devotion of long-lasting love, nor the numbing if habitable drift of indifference, but rather the eruption of an eternal

Our position, word by word.

Youth



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form of contempt, as old as the sexes themselves. This is a truth about marriage: So much of it seems so old, so long-ago lived, but each person in it is keeping strict accounts with a relentless memory. Nobody ever forgets a single moment of embarrassment, and nobody ever forgives a single moment of cruelty.

"I really thought you were different," she said scornfully. "But you're just like all men. You just think about yourself." This attack—completely justified in her eyes, as she felt that I had utterly betrayed her and through this betrayal had subjugated her to the prison of dutiful wifehood—was both wounding and amusing. It was wounding, of course, to be so bitterly denounced by someone whose respect and admiration meant everything to me. And it was amusing to be linked with this subspecies called men after several years of generously bestowed exceptionalism.

I should not have been amused. I had heard my mother and sisters talk about the worthlessness of men, of black men particularly. There is a certain special dilemma in monogamous marriage for black men and women that I was not fully cognizant of when we got married six years before. There is an entire history of bitterness and betrayal, from slavery onwards, that both black men and black women must bear, each having, at some critical moment, absolutely failed the other. During slavery, black marriage was never recognized as a truly sacred institution, and after slavery an air of recrimination existed between black men and black women: the men accused the women of being sell-outs, of sleeping with white men, loving a white Jesus, and complaining of the failures and cowardice of black men. In return, the women said that the men were weak, that they cringed before white men, and treated their women violently only because they did not have the nerve to face the real source of their frustration; they contended that, secretly, the men desired white women, the sexual conquest of whom would serve as the political fulfillment of their manhood. Growing up as a fatherless black boy, I felt the weight of this mistrust. No one yearned more than I to fulfill the duties of being father and husband; to show the world—both black and white—that I, as a black man, was not the moral failure so many supposed me to be; to be the father that I deserved as a son and the husband that my mother deserved as a wife. I wanted my marriage to be a statement, clarion-clear, that it was possible in this world that a black person could make another truly happy and would truly want to.

Be forewarned: This essay was not meant to be a confession of an adulterous encounter, the moment of crisis in my marriage and how it survived. In this era of the tabloid, I find confession to be cheaply wrought and trite. If I am drawn to such a confession, it is only as an antidote for my recent memoir, *Daughters: On Family and Fatherhood*, where I appear, despite my shortcomings, as the loving husband and father. By describing myself as true and loyal to a black wife and black children, by portraying myself as a black Ward Cleaver, I made myself into the man I imagined myself to be—and into something far more wonderful than I actually was.

So to confess a brief bout of clumsy, obsessive adultery, as destructive as it was puerile, yet as richly instructive, in its way, as any sin, stands as something of a counter-narrative ego to my *Daughters* persona, a kind of thumbing of my nose at the rewards for all of my good works. Do I have to be good, in some bourgeois sense, because I am a black man? Or, as a bourgeois black man, do I have to stand as a counter-narrative to all the black rogues of the world?

When I was a boy, there was a man in my neighborhood whose face had been horribly disfigured by his girlfriend after she caught him with another woman. She poured together a concoction of lye and Coca-Cola and threw it on him. Neighbors say that you could hear her rapid-fire curses and his blood-curdling screams, intermingling like two supremely anguished arias, for at least a city block. She went to jail. He went mad. She never returned to the neighborhood, and he walked the streets ever after, as familiar as the mailman, as pitied as a mangled dog, as dreaded as the horror he had become, always drunk, his ruined face, open and unhealed for all to see, always asking for a cigarette.

For many months after that incident, I was terrified by women. I thought it wise not to do anything to any of them that might make them do that to me. "Boy, you don't be having no woman control your life. That man," a patron in a barbershop once said to me, referring to our maimed neighbor, "is living testimony of what it costs a man not to be pussy-whipped by no woman out here. A woman try some shit like that on me, I'm goin' stick my foot so far up her goddamn ass that it won't even be funny." My mother used to tell my sisters, "Don't let no man out here mistreat you. But if he do, remember he got to sleep sometime. And you make sure to take care of that nigger's ass when he do."

I turned to my wife at the moment when my marriage seemed to be dissolving with the hope that she might, as I assumed she wished very much to do, slap my face with great violence. In the theater of marriage, such moments of operatic excess can be good: the partners in such close and closed confines need opportunities to "act out."



'Don" and "Doña," by Alexander Kaletski, from Dead Ancestors, *a series of his paintings based on formal portraits from the fourteenth to wentieth centuries, on display this fall at the Dillon Gallery in New York City. According to the show's catalogue, the paintings above show t Spanish couple caught in "the emotional tension of formal courtship." Kaletski lives in New York City.*

But the moment passed between me and my wife. Her hatred subsided. She never struck me. Indeed, almost immediately, she took the wifely high road and chose to pity me instead. Implicit in her reaction was not only forgiveness but also a certain acknowledgment, required on my part, fully understood on her part, that she was the morally superior partner. But this was only the short-term response. In the long term my wife responded elegantly and gracefully: she set her sense of superiority aside. If a monogamous marriage—whether black or white—is to endure, any partner's failure must be a shared burden. She learned to live with her disappointment, and even to learn from it, as I learned to live with my shame.

And so we learned to live with each other anew—and probably better, for it all. It is a poignant and painful point to remember that marriage requires taking one for better or for worse. After all, everyone is wounded in the same old places, and there are limits to what can be achieved by picking at the scabs of one another's faults. We hardly need the sensational example of O. J. and Nicole Brown Simpson to understand that monogamous marriage can be a barbarous institution. James McMichael's recent account of the breakup of his second marriage, *Each in a Place Apart*, or Marvin Gaye's 1978 album, *Here, My Dear*, about the breakup of his first marriage—these works remind us that nothing brings out the explosive anger that lies beneath the surface of the relations between men and women like the moment when a marriage is no longer tenable, when one thinks of how much one has endured for the other's sake. Marriage at the point of its dissolution becomes something that one most terrifyingly wishes to hold on to because it is, alas, better than nothing, or better with this person than with the possible persons one might meet or might have met. It is perhaps the sheer accident of it all, winding up with this person instead of some other, that overwhelms at times. Marriage, in its barbarous civility, in its impossible dependence and impossible expectation, assures one that in the vast meaninglessness of the world, one can, only through the most monumental and absurd of accidental unions, hope to find the true rudder of meaning, at last.

[Obituaries]

TOO GOOD FOR THIS EARTH

From the Winter issue of Circle Network News, *a quarterly newspaper published in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, that contains "information pertaining to Wiccan traditions, Shamanism, Goddess Spirituality, Ecofeminism, Animism, and other forms of contemporary Paganism." The items below appeared in the paper's Passages section, which contains readers' announcements of births, coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and "other rites of passage."*

Snoopy Wind Chaser, beloved companion and "witch pup" to Stormy and one who held a special place in all of Stormy's rituals, had to be placed in the local humane society and put to sleep after losing a battle with ear mites. Stormy's world is empty without Snoopy, and the kitties miss their "Auntie." I love you, my "wind chaser." Be at peace! May Pan protect you and guide you through your passage. One day we will "walk the wind" together again!

Breoch, beloved hamster friend of Lira and Rowan, fell asleep in his food dish on the morning of June 25, 1994, and awoke in the Summerland. Since the passing of his brother and dearest companion, Gwion, three months earlier, Breoch had lost much of his vitality and zest for life. After keening for their little Breoch and placing his soul in the hands of the Goddess, Lira and Rowan made funeral arrangements with the aid of a nearby veterinary clinic. They love you, Breoch, and especially miss receiving your kisses. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

For Apple Scruffs (April 21, 1977, to August 20, 1994), fur child and familiar of Sherry: On the whole of the Moon, as the Michigan sky broke open and wept, the Great Compañera gently took my little girl from my arms and wrapped her in Her own. I mourned three days and nights by the ritual fire. And in the mist, I glimpsed a wide-eyed calico prancing lightly, posing familiar question-meows. As she approached the gate, she was met by Windy and Mr. Baggins, who touched their noses to hers. And then Scruffs discovered her wings! Delighted laughter of four souls echoes through years and tears, throughout the worlds.

[Memoir]

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

From "Embalming Father," by Thomas Lynch, in the July 20 issue of The London Review of Books. *Lynch is an undertaker in Milford, Michigan, and is the author of* Grimalkin & Other Poems, *published in England by Random House. His essay "Burying the Ungrateful Dead" appeared in the April issue of* Harper's Magazine.

My father died three years ago on an island off the coast of Florida. He was sharing a condo with a woman friend who overestimated the remedial powers of sexual aerobics. Or maybe she underestimated the progress of his heart disease. All of his children knew it was coming. In the first year of his widowhood, he sat in his chair, heartsore, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Then he started going out with women. His sons were glad for him. His daughters rolled their eyes. In the two years of consortium that followed, he'd had a major—which is to say a chest-ripping, down-for-the-count-type—heart attack every six months like clockwork. He survived all but one. "Three out of four," I can hear him saying, "but when it's over, you're still dead." He'd had enough. Even now, I think of that final scene in *Doctor Zhivago* when Zhivago's heart is described as "paper thin." He thinks he sees Lara turning a corner in Moscow. He struggles to get off the bus, loosens his tie, and finally makes it to the sidewalk, where, after two steps, he drops dead. Dead chasing love. That was my father—stepping not off a bus but out of a shower in his time-share condo, not in Moscow but on Boca Grande—chasing, just as certainly, love. Chasing it to death.

We are a family of undertakers—five of my eight siblings work in funeral homes that bear my father's name—so when we got the call from his woman friend, my brother and I knew what to do. We had a traveling kit of embalming supplies: gloves, fluids, needles, odds and ends. We had to explain ourselves to the security people at the airlines, who scrutinized the contents of the bag, wondering if we might be able to make a bomb out of embalming fluid or overtake the cabin crew with a box marked "Slaughter Surgical Supplies" that was full of stainless steel instruments they'd never seen before. When we got to the funeral home they had taken him to, the undertaker there asked if we were sure we wanted to do this—our own father, after all—and said he'd be happy to call



"Underwater Study 226C," by Howard Schatz, from Waterdance, *a collection of Schatz's photographs published by Graphis. Schatz photographed members of the San Francisco Ballet underwater, in an eight-foot pool, using "specially configured cameras while sitting on the bottom holding his breath."*

in one of his own embalmers. We assured him that it would be okay. He showed us into the prep room, that familiar decor of porcelain and tile and fluorescent light—a tidy scientific venue for the horror of mortality, how easily we slip from is to isn't.

It was something we had always promised him, though I can't remember the context in which it was made—the promise that when he died his sons would embalm him, dress him, pick out a casket, lay him out, prepare the obits, contact the priests, manage the flowers, the casseroles, the wake and procession, the Mass and burial. Maybe it was just understood. His was a funeral he would not have to direct. It was ours to do; and though he'd directed thousands of funerals, he had never mentioned his own preferences. Whenever he was pressed on the matter he would only say, "You'll know what to do." We did.

I had seen my father horizontal before, most recently in intensive care units after his coronaries and bypasses, when he was helpless, done unto. But before that there had been the man lying on the living room rug tossing one of my younger siblings in the air; or napping on his office floor at the first funeral home in full uniform—black three-piece, striped tie, wing tips, clean shave; or reclining in the bathtub singing, "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli!" In my childhood he was, like every father on the block, invincible. That he would die had been a fiction in my teens, a fear in my twenties, a specter in my thirties, and, in my forties, a fact.

But seeing him stretched out on the embalming table of the Anderson Mortuary in Fort Myers, with the cardiac blue in his ears and fingertips and along his shoulders and lower ribs and buttocks and heels, I thought, *This is what my father will look like when he's dead.* And then, as if a door slammed shut behind me, the tense shifted into the inescapable present: *This is my father, dead.* My brother and I hugged each other and wept for ourselves and for our sisters and brothers back in Michigan. Then I kissed my father's forehead, and we went to work in the way he had trained us.

His was a cooperative body. Despite the ar-

teriosclerosis, his circulatory system made the [illegible]. And having just stepped from the shower into his doom, he was clean and freshly shaven. Since he hadn't been sick in the intensive care sense of the word, there were none of the bruises or tubes wrought by medical science. He'd gotten the death he wanted: caught in full stride, hit quickly and cleanly after a day strolling the beach picking sea shells for the grandchildren, and maybe after a little bone bouncing with his condomate, though she never said and we never asked and can only hope.

His body bore a kind of history: the tattoo with my mother's name on it that he'd had done as an eighteen-year-old Marine during World War II, the perfectly trimmed mustache I used to watch him darken with my mother's mascara when he was younger than I am now, the scars from his quintuple-bypass surgery, the AA medallion he never removed, and the signet ring we gave him for his fortieth birthday, all of us saving money in a jar until fifty dollars had accumulated. I massaged his legs, his hands, his arms so that the fluid that would temporarily preserve him would be properly distributed. Watching the blue clear from his fingertips and heels as the liquid worked its way around his body, I was reminded of how we bury our dead and then become them. In the end I had to say, *Maybe this is what I am going to look like dead.*



From the [illegible]

We flew his body back, faxed the obits to the local papers, called the priests, the sexton, the florists, and the stonecutter. We act out things we cannot put into words.

I can remember my father, back in 1963, saying that the reason we have funerals and open caskets was so that we might confront what he called "the reality of death." The participation of the dead human body in its funeral, he used to say, is just as important as the bride being at her wedding, the baby at its baptism. He loved to quote Gladstone, the great Victorian liberal, who wrote that he could measure with mathematical precision a people's respect for the laws of the land by the way they cared for their dead. In 1963, Jessica Mitford had just sold a million copies of *The American Way of Death*, and Evelyn Waugh had lampooned the funeral industry in *The Loved One*. At cocktail parties, people were referring to funerals as "barbaric rituals" and "morbid curiosities," and the mortuary associations were scrambling for cover. Clergy, educators, and psychologists were assembled to proclaim that undertakers' work did in fact serve some purpose, that it was emotionally efficient, psychologically correct, to do what we'd been doing all along. The track record was pretty good on this. We—the species, not the undertakers—had been doing more or less the same thing for millennia: looking up while digging down, trying to make some sense out of it, disposing of our dead with sufficient pause to say that they'd lived in ways different from rocks and rhododendrons and that those lives were worth mentioning and remembering.

As I watch my generation labor to give their teenagers and young adults some "family values" between courses of pizza and Big Macs, I think that maybe my father had it right. He understood that the meaning of life is connected, inextricably, to the meaning of death; that mourning is a romance in reverse, and if you love, you grieve, and there are no exceptions. And if death is regarded as an embarrassment or an inconvenience, if the dead are regarded as a nuisance from whom we seek a hurried riddance, then life and the living are in for similar treatment.

Thus tending to my father's death, his dead body, had for me the same importance as being present for the births of my sons and daughter. Some expert on *Oprah* might call this "healing." Another on *Donahue* might mention "making good choices." But it is not about choices or functions or psychological correctness. The bodies of the newly dead are not remnant, nor are they entirely essence. They are, rather, changelings, incubates, hatchlings of a new reality. It is wise to treat such new things tenderly, carefully, with honor. ■

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AZ 293 HPR 1

THE HEAT IS ON

The warming of the world's climate sparks a blaze of denial

By Ross Gelbspan

After my lawn had burned away to straw last summer, and the local papers announced that the season had been one of the driest in the recorded history of New England, I found myself wondering how long we can go on pretending that nothing is amiss with the world's weather. It wasn't just the fifty ducks near my house that had died when falling water levels in a creek exposed them to botulism-infested mud, or the five hundred people dead in the Midwest from an unexpected heat wave that followed the season's second "one-hundred-year flood" in three years. It was also the news from New Orleans (overrun by an extraordinary number of cockroaches and termites after a fifth consecutive winter without a killing frost), from Spain (suffering a fourth year of drought in a region that ordinarily enjoys a rainfall of 84 inches a year), and from London (Britain's meteorological office reporting the driest summer since 1727 and the hottest since 1659).

The reports of changes in the world's climate have been with us for fifteen or twenty years, most urgently since 1988, when Dr. James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, declared that the era of global warming was at hand. As a newspaper correspondent who had reported on the United Nations Conferences on the environment in Stockholm in 1972 and in Rio in 1992, I understood something of the ill effects apt to result from the extravagant burning of oil and coal. New record-setting weather extremes seem to have become as commonplace as traffic accidents, and three simple facts have long been known: the distance from the surface of

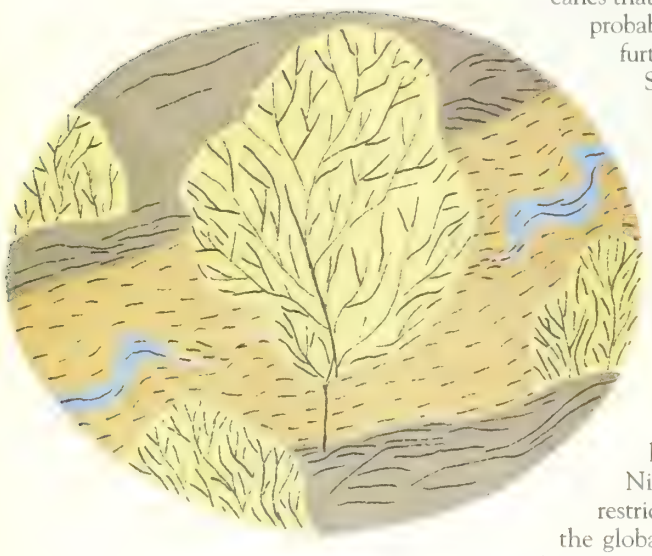
Ross Gelbspan recently concluded a thirty-year career as an editor and reporter at the Philadelphia Bulletin, *the* Washington Post, *the* Village Voice, *and the* Boston Globe *during which he wrote extensively about environmental affairs, civil liberties, and race relations. In 1984, he was a co-recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for public-service reporting.*

GLOBAL WARMING, SCIENTISTS NOW AGREE, WILL CAUSE WIDESPREAD ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL "DISLOCATION"

the earth to the far edge of the inner atmosphere is only twelve miles; the annual amount of carbon dioxide forced into that limited space is six billion tons; and the ten hottest years in recorded human history have all occurred since 1980. The facts beg a question that is as simple to ask as it is hard to answer. What do we do with what we know?

The question became more pointed in September, when the 2,500 climate scientists serving on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a new statement on the prospect of forthcoming catastrophe. Never before had the IPCC (called into existence in 1988) come to so unambiguous a conclusion. Always in years past there had been people saying that we didn't yet know enough, or that the evidence was problematical, or our system of computer simulation was subject to too many uncertainties. Not this year. The panel flatly announced that the earth had entered a period of climatic instability likely to cause "widespread economic, social and environmental dislocation over the next century." The continuing emission of greenhouse gases would create protracted, crop-destroying droughts in continental interiors, a host of new and recurring diseases, hurricanes of extraordinary malevolence, and rising sea levels that could inundate island nations and low-lying coastal rims on the continents.

I came across the report in the *New York Times* during the same week that the island of St. Thomas was blasted to shambles by one of thirteen hurricanes that roiled the Caribbean this fall. Scientists speak the language of probability. They prefer to avoid making statements that cannot be further corrected, reinterpreted, modified, or proven wrong. If its September announcement was uncharacteristically bold, possibly it was because the IPCC scientists understood that they were addressing their remarks to people profoundly unwilling to hear what they had to say.



That resistance is understandable, given the immensity of the stakes. The energy industries now constitute the largest single enterprise known to mankind. Moreover they are indivisible from automobile, farming, shipping air freight, and banking interests, as well as from the governments dependent on oil revenues for their very existence. With annual sales in excess of one trillion dollars and daily sales of more than two billion dollars, the oil industry alone supports the economies of the Middle East and large segments of the economies of Russia, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria, Indonesia, Norway, and Great Britain. Begin to enforce restriction on the consumption of oil and coal, and the effects on the global economy—unemployment, depression, social breakdown and war—might lay waste to what we have come to call civilization. It is no wonder that for the last five or six years many of the world's politicians and most of the world's news media have been promoting the perception that the worries about the weather are overwrought. Ever since the IPCC first set out to devise strategies whereby the nations of the world might reduce the carbon dioxide emissions, and thus ward off a rise in the average global temperature on the order of 4 or 5 degrees Celsius (roughly equal in magnitude to the difference between the last ice age and the current climatic period), the energy industry has been conducting, not unreasonably, a ferocious public relations campaign meant to sell the notion that science, any science, is always a matter of uncertainty. Yet on reading the news from the IPCC, I wondered how the oil company publicists would confront the most recent series of geophysical events and scientific findings. To wit:

- A 48-by-22-mile chunk of the Larsen Ice Shelf in the Antarctic broke off last March, exposing rocks that had been buried for 20,000 years and prompting Rodolfo del Valle of the Argentine Antarctic Institute to tell the Associated Press, "Last November we predicted the [ice shelf] would crack in ten years, but it has happened in barely two months."
- In April, researchers discovered a 70 percent decline in the popul

Illustrations by Brian Cro

tion of zooplankton off the coast of southern California, raising questions about the survival of several species of fish that feed on it. Scientists have linked the change to a 1 to 2 degree C increase in the surface water temperature over the last four decades.

◆A recent series of articles in *The Lancet*, a British medical journal, linked changes in climate patterns to the spread of infectious diseases around the world. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which spreads dengue fever and yellow fever, has traditionally been unable to survive at altitudes higher than 1,000 meters above sea level. But these mosquitoes are now being reported at 1,150 meters in Costa Rica and at 2,200 meters in Colombia. Ocean warming has triggered algae blooms linked to outbreaks of cholera in India, Bangladesh, and the Pacific coast of South America, where, in 1991, the disease infected more than 400,000 people.

◆In a paper published in *Science* in April, David J. Thomson, of the AT&T Bell Laboratories, concluded that the .6 degree C warming of the average global temperature over the past century correlates directly with the buildup of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Separate findings by a team of scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center indicate that growing weather extremes in the United States are due, by a probability of 90 percent, to rising levels of greenhouse gases.

◆Scientists previously believed that the transitions between ice ages and more moderate climatic periods occur gradually, over centuries. But researchers from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, examining deep ocean sediment and ice core samples, found that these shifts, with their temperature changes of up to 7 degrees C, have occurred within three to four decades—a virtual nanosecond in geological time. Over the last 70,000 years, the earth's climate has snapped into radically different temperature regimes. "Our results suggest that the present climate system is very delicately poised," said researcher Scott Lehman. "Shifts could happen very rapidly if conditions are right, and we cannot predict when that will occur." His cautionary tone is underscored by findings that the end of the last ice age, some 8,000 years ago, was preceded by a series of extreme oscillations in which severe regional deep freezes alternated with warming spikes. As the North Atlantic warmed, Arctic snowmelts and increased rainfall diluted the salt content of the ocean, which, in turn, redirected the ocean's warming current from a northeasterly direction to one that ran nearly due east. Should such an episode occur today, say researchers, "the present climate of Britain and Norway would change suddenly to that of Greenland."

These items (and many like them) would seem to be alarming news—far more important than the candidacy of Colin Powell, or even whether Newt Gingrich believes the government should feed poor children—worthy of a national debate or the sustained attention of Congress. But the signs and portents have been largely ignored, relegated to the environmental press and the oddball margins of the mass media. More often than not, the news about the accelerating retreat of the world's glaciers or the heat- and insect-stressed Canadian forests comes qualified with the observation that the question of global warming never can be conclusively resolved. The confusion is intentional, expensively gift wrapped by the energy industries.

Capital keeps its nose to the wind. The people who run the world's oil and coal companies know that the march of science, and of political action, may be slowed by disinformation. In the last year and a half, one of the leading oil industry public relations outlets, the Global Climate Coalition, has spent more than a million dollars to downplay the threat of climate change. It expects to spend another $850,000 on the issue next year. Similarly, the National Coal Association spent more than $700,000 on the global climate issue in 1992 and 1993. In 1993 alone, the American

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THE OIL AND COAL INDUSTRIES HAVE RELIED ON SKEPTICS WHO ARE ADEPT AT DRAINING THE ISSUE OF ALL SENSE OF CRISIS

Petroleum Institute, just one of fifty-four industry members of the GCC, paid $1.8 million to the public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller partly in an effort to defeat a proposed tax on fossil fuels. For perspective, this is only slightly less than the combined yearly expenditures on global warming of the five major environmental groups that focus on climate issues—about $2.1 million, according to officials of the Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the World Wildlife Fund.

For the most part the industry has relied on a small band of skeptics—Dr. Richard S. Lindzen, Dr. Pat Michaels, Dr. Robert Balling, Dr. Sherwood Idso, and Dr. S. Fred Singer, among others—who have proven extraordinarily adept at draining the issue of all sense of crisis. Through their frequent pronouncements in the press and on radio and television, they have helped to create the illusion that the question is hopelessly mired in unknowns. Most damaging has been their influence on decision makers; their contrarian views have allowed conservative Republicans such as Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R., Calif.) to dismiss legitimate research concerns as "liberal claptrap" and have provided the basis for the recent round of budget cuts to those government science programs designed to monitor the health of the planet.

Last May, Minnesota held hearings in St. Paul to determine the environmental cost of coal burning by state power plants. Three of the skeptics—Lindzen, Michaels, and Balling—were hired as expert witnesses to testify on behalf of Western Fuels Association, a $400 million consortium of coal suppliers and coal-fired utilities.[1]



An especially aggressive industry player, Western Fuels was quite candid about its strategy in two annual reports: "[T]here has been a close to universal impulse in the trade association community here in Washington to concede the scientific premise of global warming . . . while arguing over policy prescriptions that would be the least disruptive to our economy. . . . We have disagreed, and do disagree, with this strategy." "When [the climate change] controversy first erupted . . . scientists were found who are skeptical about much of what seemed generally accepted about the potential for climate change." Among them were Michaels, Balling, and S. Fred Singer.

Lindzen, a distinguished professor of meteorology at MIT, testified in St. Paul that the maximum probable warming of the atmosphere in the face of a doubling of carbon dioxide emissions over the next century would amount to no more than a negligible .3 degrees C. Michaels, who teaches climatology at the University of Virginia, stated that he foresaw no increase in the rate of sea level rise—another feared precursor of global warming. Balling, who works on climate issues at Arizona State University, declared that the increase in emissions would boost the average global temperature by no more than one degree.

At first glance, these attacks appear defensible, given their focus on the black holes of uncertainty that mark our current knowledge of the planet's exquisitely interrelated climate system. The skeptics emphasize the inade-

[1] *In 1991, Western Fuels spent an estimated $250,000 to produce and distribute a video entitled "The Greening of Planet Earth," which was shown frequently inside the Bush White House as well as within the governments of OPEC. In near-evangelical tones, the video promises that a new age of agricultural abundance will result from increasing concentrations of carbon dioxide. It portrays a world where vast areas of desert are reclaimed by the carbon dioxide–forced growth of new grasslands, where the earth's diminishing forests are replenished by a nurturing atmosphere. Unfortunately, it overlooks the bugs. Experts note that even a minor elevation in temperature would trigger an explosion in the planet's insect population, leading to potentially significant disruptions in food supplies from crop damage as well as to a surge in insect-borne diseases. It appears that Western Fuels' video fails to tell people what the termites in New Orleans may be trying to tell them now.*

quacy of a major climate research tool known as a General Circulation Model, and our ignorance of carbon dioxide exchange between the oceans and the atmosphere and of the various roles of clouds. They have repeatedly pointed out that although the world's output of carbon dioxide has exploded since 1940, there has been no corresponding increase in the global temperature. The larger scientific community, by contrast, holds that this is due to the masking effect of low-level sulfur particulates, which exert a temporary cooling effect on the earth, and to a time lag in the oceans' absorption and release of carbon dioxide.

But while the skeptics portray themselves as besieged truth-seekers sending off irresponsible environmental doomsayers, their testimony in St. Paul and elsewhere revealed the source and scope of their funding for the first time. Michaels has received more than $115,000 over the last four years from coal and energy interests. *World Climate Review*, a quarterly he founded that routinely debunks climate concerns, was funded by Western Fuels. Over the last six years, either alone or with colleagues, Balling has received more than $200,000 from coal and oil interests in Great Britain, Germany, and elsewhere. Balling (along with Sherwood Idso) has also taken money from Cyprus Minerals, a mining company that has been a major funder of People for the West—a militantly anti-environmental "Wise Use" group. Lindzen, for his part, charges oil and coal interests $2,500 a day for his consulting services; his 1991 trip to testify before a Senate committee was paid for by Western Fuels, and a speech he wrote, entitled "Global Warming: the Origin and Nature of Alleged Scientific Consensus," was underwritten by OPEC. Singer, who last winter proposed a $95,000 publicity project to "stem the tide towards ever more onerous controls on energy use," has received consulting fees from Exxon, Shell, Unocal, ARCO, and Sun Oil, and has warned them that they face the same threat as the chemical firms that produced chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), a class of chemicals found to be depleting atmospheric ozone. "It took only five years to go from . . . a simple freeze of production [of CFCs]," Singer has written, ". . . to the 1992 decision of a complete production phase-out—all on the basis of quite insubstantial science."[2]

The skeptics assert flatly that their science is untainted by funding. Nevertheless, in this persistent and well-funded campaign of denial they have become interchangeable ornaments on the hood of a high-powered engine of disinformation. Their dissenting opinions are amplified beyond all proportion through the media while the concerns of the dominant majority of the world's scientific establishment are marginalized.[3] By keeping the discussion focused on whether there is a problem in the first place, they have effectively silenced the debate over what to do about it.

THE SKEPTICS HAVE BECOME INTERCHANGEABLE HOOD ORNAMENTS ON A HIGH-POWERED ENGINE OF DISINFORMATION



Contrary to his assertion, however, virtually all relevant researchers say the link between CFCs and ozone depletion is based on unassailably solid scientific evidence. As if to underscore the point, in May the research director of the European Union Commission estimated that last winter's ozone loss will result in about 80,000 additional cases of skin cancer in Europe. This fall, the three scientists who discovered the CFC-ozone link won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

The industry's public relations arsenal, however, is made up of much more than a few sympathetic scientists. Last March, the Global Climate Coalition distributed a report by Accu-Weather Inc. that denied any significant increase in extreme weather events. The report flies in the face of contradictory evidence cited by officials of the insurance industry, which, during the 1980s, paid an average of $3 billion a year to victims of natural disasters—a figure that has jumped to $10 billion a year in this decade. A top official of a Swiss reinsurance firm told the World Watch Institute: "There is a significant body of scientific evidence indicating that [the recent] record insured loss from natural catastrophes was not a random occurrence." More succinctly, the president of the Reinsurance Association of America said climate change "could bankrupt the industry."

WHAT IF, AT THE COST OF CORPORATE POCKET CHANGE, ENERGY GIANTS CAN CONTROL OUR PERCEPTION OF THE PLANET?

Last spring's IPCC conference in Berlin is a good example. Delegations from 170 nations met to negotiate targets and timetables for reducing the world's carbon dioxide emissions. The efforts of the conference ultimately foundered on foot-dragging by the United States and Japan and active resistance from the OPEC nations. Leading the fight for the most dramatic reductions—to 60 percent of 1990 levels—was a coalition of small island nations from the Caribbean and the Pacific that fear being flooded out of existence. They were supported by most western European governments, but China and India, with their vast coal resources, argued that until the United States significantly cuts its own emissions, their obligation to develop their own economies outranked their obligation to the global environment. In the end, OPEC, supported by the United States, Japan, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, rejected calls to limit emissions, declaring emission limits premature.

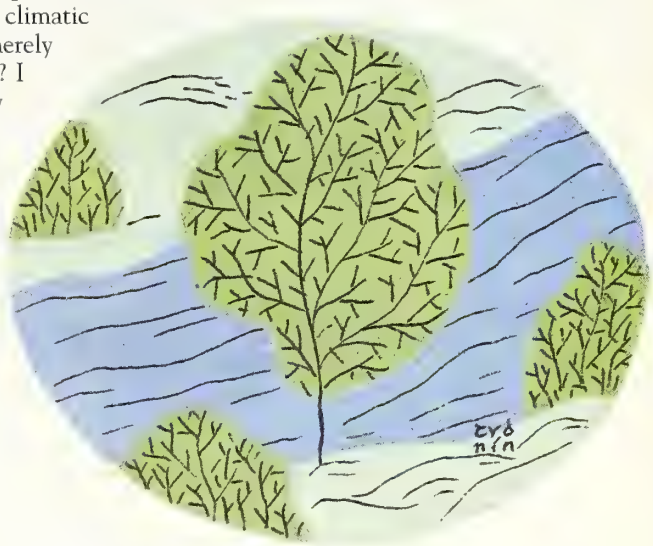
As the natural crisis escalates, so will the forces of institutional and societal denial. If, at the cost of corporate pocket change, industrial giants can control the publicly perceived reality of the condition of the planet and the state of our scientific knowledge, what would they do if their survival were truly put at risk? Billions would be spent on the creation of information and the control of politicians. Glad-handing oil company ads on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* (from a quarter-page pronouncement by Mobil last September 28: "There's a lot of good news out there") would give way to a new stream of selective findings by privatized scientists. Long before the planet itself collapsed, democracy would break apart under the stress of "natural" disasters. It is not difficult to foresee that in an ecological state of emergency our political liberties would be the first casualties.

Thus, the question must be asked: can civilization change the way it operates? For 5,000 years, we have thought of ourselves as dependent children of the earth, flourishing or perishing according to the whims of nature. But with the explosion of the power of our technology and the size of our population, our activities have grown to the proportion of geological forces, affecting the major systems of the planet. Short of the Atlantic washing away half of Florida, the abstract notion that the old anomalies have become the new norm is difficult to grasp. Dr. James McCarthy of Harvard, who has supervised the work of climate scientists from sixty nations, puts it this way: "If the last 150 years had been marked by the kind of climate instability we are now seeing, the world would never have been able to support its present population of 5 billion people." We live in a world of man-size urgencies, measured in hours or days. What unfolds slowly is not, by our lights, urgent, and it will therefore take a collective act of imagination to understand the extremity of the situation we now confront. The lag time in our planet's ecological systems will undoubtedly delay these decisions, and even if the nations of the world were to agree tomorrow on a plan to phase out oil and coal and convert to renewable energies, an equivalent lag time in human affairs would delay its implementation for years. What too many people refuse to understand is that the global economy's existence depends upon the global environment, not the other way around. One cannot negotiate jobs, development, or rates of economic growth with nature.

What of the standard list of palliatives—carbon taxes, more energy-efficient buildings, a revival of public transportation? The ideas are attractive, but the thinking is too small. Even were the United States to halve its own carbon dioxide contribution, this cutback would soon be overwhelmed by the coming development of industry and housing and schools in China and India and Mexico for all their billions of citizens. No solution can work that does not provide ample energy resources for the development of all the world's nations.

So here is an informal proposal—at best a starting point for a conversation—from one man who is not an expert. What if we turned the deserts of the world into electricity farms? Let the Middle East countries keep their

IN THE FOREST, I WAS VISITED BY UNWELCOME AND INDESCRIBABLY SAD PREMONITIONS OF THE COMING SICKNESS OF THE TREES



il royalties as solar royalties. What if the world mobilized around a ten-ear project to phase out all fossil fuels, to develop renewable energy tech-ıologies, to extend those technologies to every corner of the world? What f, to minimize the conflict of so massive a dislocation, the world's energy ompanies were put in charge of the transition—answering only to an in-ernational regulatory body and an enforceable timetable? Grant them the ame profit margins for solar electricity and hydrogen fuel they now receive or petroleum and coal. Give them the licenses for all renewable energy echnologies. Assure them the same relative position in the world's econo-ıy they now enjoy at the end of the project.

Are these ideas mere dream? Perhaps, but there are historical reasons to ave hope. Four years ago a significant fraction of humanity overturned its Communist system in a historical blink of an eye. Eight years ago the world's overnments joined together in Montreal to regulate CFCs. Technology is ot the issue. The atomic bomb was developed in two and a half years. 'utting a man on the moon took eleven. Surely, given the same sense of ur-ency, we can develop new energy systems in ten years. Most of the technol-gy is already available to us or soon will be. We have the knowledge, the nergy, and the hunger for jobs to get it done. And we are different in one nmeasurable way from previous generations: ours is the first to be educated bout the larger world by the global reach of electronic information.

The leaders of the oil and coal industry, along with their skeptical scien-ists, relentlessly accuse environmentalists of overstating the climatic hreat to destroy capitalism. Must a transformation that is merely echnological dislodge the keystone of the economic order? I on't know. But I do know that technology changes the way 're conceive of the world. To transform our economy would blige us to understand the limits of the planet. That un-erstanding alone might seed the culture with a more or-anic concept of ourselves and our connectedness to the arth. And corporations, it is useful to remember, are not nly obstacles on the road to the future. They are also rucibles of technology and organizing engines of pro-uction, the modern expression of mankind's drive for reativity. The industrialist is no less human than the oet, and both the climate scientist and the oil company operator inhabit the same planet, suffer the same short life span, harbor the same hopes for their children.

Each summer, our family walks the deep north Maine woods in search of adventure and a sense of renewal. The trip his year was different for me; I was visited by premonitions of the coming ckness of the forests, haunted by unwelcome and indescribably sad imag-ings. They intruded at unexpected moments. One night while listening o a dialogue of loons on a black lake I suddenly experienced a momen-ary feeling of bottomless grief. Struck by the recognition of how fragile as the frame of the world, and how easily it could be shattered by our utual distrust and confusion, I feared that the cause of survival would be st to the greed and alienation and shortsightedness that dog our few last eps to the threshold of the millennium. My dream of reconfiguring the obal economy was probably nothing more than the hopeless longing of a porter, not a social thinker or macroeconomic engineer.

But I am also a husband and a father, a son, and a grandson. And some-ay perhaps a grandfather. Our history is rich with visionaries urging us to ange our ways of thinking, asking questions about the meaning of the st and the shape of the future. Now the questions are being posed, in a nguage we don't yet fully understand, by the oceans. I have promised yself that next summer I will keep my lawn watered, at least as long as e water holds out. ■

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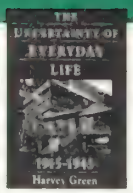


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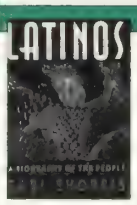
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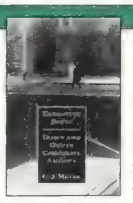
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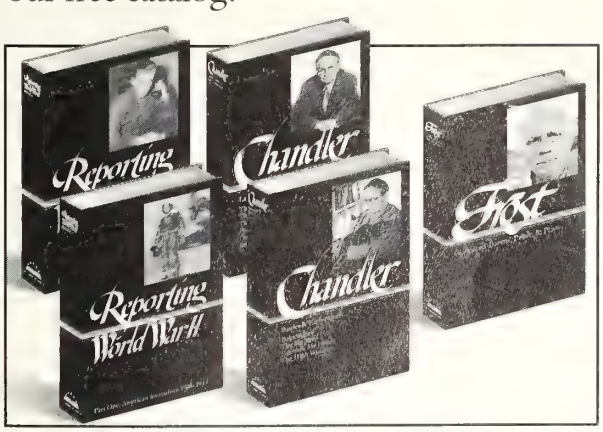
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LOOKING FOR MR. YAPONCHIK

The rise and fall of a Russian mobster in America

By Scott Anderson

"To cultural exchange!" Misha, the failed Russian soft-core pornographer, raised his vodka glass yet again. I feared this was a reference to the Kiev Project. It was cabaret night at the Cafe Arbat in the Brighton Beach neighborhood of Brooklyn, and Misha and I had been locked in a duel of toasts for several hours: to each other's health, to long life, to the future of Russian democracy, but mostly to the various joint business ventures that Misha was convinced we were soon to embark upon. Although I had been studiously noncommittal about his other schemes—starting a marriage-brokering service that would match beautiful Russian girls with American dentists, obtaining U.S. licensing rights to the miracle male-sexual-potency drug secretly being developed by a team of German scientists—I had been unable to mask my curiosity about the Kiev Project. After all, it is not often that one is invited to organize an international goodwill tour for a troupe of Ukrainian exotic dancers.

"The best dancers in the world," Misha had explained, "and I know them all personally. I am organizing them in Kiev, you are fund-raising here in America—maybe your magazine bosses are contributing—and we will be having very good cultural exchange."

"Cultural exchange," I had come to realize over the course of our acquaintance, was a complex term in Misha's lexicon, elastic enough to encompass, simultaneously, making money, committing fraud, and having sex.

Quite aside from the Kiev Project and the vodka, however, cabaret night with Misha had begun to go badly awry. During the last band break, the middle-aged "entrepreneur" ("always I am thinking how to involve myself in free-market ideas") had waved over Anna, a cabaret singer wearing a tight sequined dress and an extravagant red wig, and introduced me as a wealthy and important American journalist. These oxymorons clearly didn't translate in Russian, for Anna had been dedicating songs to me ever since, casting pouty smiles in my direction during the accordion player's extended riffs. These affectionate displays seemed to annoy the larger of the two crew-cut thugs sitting on my left; interspersed with dark mutterings to his companion, he had taken to glaring at me and ostentatiously rolling his head, like a boxer about to step into the ring. The outlook was little better on my right, where a party of perhaps two dozen Russian Jews were becoming increasingly vexed by the anti-Semitic remarks that Misha—Jewish himself—had taken to proclaiming loudly whenever the tension elsewhere seemed to flag.

Nor did I have much confidence that any-

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one in the Cafe Arbat would come to my aid f things got ugly, for I remembered what had happened to Oleg Korataev. In January 1994, Korataev, a former boxer and a reputed enforcer for the Russian mafia in Brighton Beach, was celebrating Russian New Year in the Arbat when he stepped outside with a companion. When Korataev looked away for moment, his companion shot him in the back of the head with a .38, then left his body on the sidewalk and returned to the nightclub to resume the festivities. The police interviewed dozens of Arbat patrons that night and found no one who could identify the killer.

In short, it seemed like a good idea to wrap things up with Misha and get to the point of our meeting. I asked if he had learned anything new about Yaponchik.

"Of course," Misha said. "All the time I am making more and more progress on the Yaponchik Project."

Yaponchik—"Little Japanese" in Russian—was the nickname of Vyacheslav Kirillovich Ivankov, one of the most infamous godfathers of the Russian underworld. Rumor had it he was in New York to unite the Russian émigré mafias. For months, I had heard Ivankov's name darkly muttered by law enforcement officers and Brighton Beach residents, and had collected news articles alluding to his exploits.

Misha filled our vodka glasses once more. "Yes, very soon we will be meeting with Yaponchik. It might be expensive, naturally."

"How expensive?"

Misha shrugged. "Impossible to say." With a pleased smile, he raised his glass again. "To cultural exchange."

It was but one more maddening episode in my long search for Little Japanese. At the outset, it had seemed straightforward enough, a classic gangster-story assignment: meet the godfather, talk to his law enforcement adversaries, chronicle his crimes. Instead, Yaponchik had become a journalist's worst nightmare, an enigma always beyond my grasp, a figure of legend, the protagonist of a dozen whispered—and unprovable—stories.

It would be many months after that meeting with Misha before I finally understood why. In my hunt for Yaponchik, I would come to realize, I had left the underworld as I knew it and entered a far more mysterious place, a shadow world where gangsters, cops, and journalists maneuver and manipulate one another in a volatile game of bluff and intrigue. It is a game in which fortunes and reputations are made, in which the line between enemy and ally shifts constantly, in which the stakes grow ever higher. For a while Yaponchik played this game and played it very well. Then he lost.

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated with gangsters. Not run-of-the-mill criminals but those of a refined darkness: outlaws with panache, a taste for the high life, snappy nicknames. Through both chance and design, I've come to know quite a few such men over the years, often in odd corners of the globe. My proclivity first found expression at the age of fourteen, when, left virtually unsupervised in Bangkok for two months, I fell in with a group of young Chinese vice lords in the Patpong red-light district. It wasn't that I wanted to become one of them exactly, but there was something undeniably thrilling about being in their company—the deferent looks we engendered walking down a street, the ripple of consternation that accompanied our entrance into a nightclub, the cryptic and whispered conversations with bar girls and bouncers and nattily dressed confederates—and it would be many years before I fully grasped the depths of moral bankruptcy to which I had been subjected.

By then it was too late; gangsters and I had developed the uncanny ability to locate one another. One evening in West Beirut, during the bloody summer of 1983, I found myself on the balcony of a penthouse with a middle-aged Druze named Suheih, a war profiteer in a white linen suit, watching artillery shells fall on the city from the eastern foothills. Oblivious to the



RUSSIAN EMIGRES ON THE BRIGHTON BEACH BOARDWALK

tograph by Stephen Ferry / Gamma Liaison



THE BOARDWALK'S MAIN BUSINESSES IN EARLY EVENING

shells and sporadic sniper fire, Suheih leaned against the railing, eating pistachio nuts and noting which neighborhoods were being hardest hit, already speculating about which commodity would be the most lucrative to deliver across the battle lines the next day: penicillin, bottled water, even body-sniffing dogs brought in from Europe. "Times of difficulty are also times of opportunity," he explained.

Over the years, my circle of gangster acquaintances expanded—aging mafiosi in Nevada, paramilitary warlords in Belfast, a smuggling *patrón* in northern Mexico—enough for me to gradually notice a remarkable sameness among them. No matter what their age or ethnicity or criminal specialty, all gangsters seemed to possess the same essential outlook on life—"In all matters, I come first"—and to present the same basic public persona: a dead-fish stare; a haughty, contemptuous manner; a predatory aura that tended to keep "civilians" out of their way.

It was these universal signs of the underworld that first led me to notice the two Russian gangsters on the F train out of Manhattan. The men were in their early thirties, poker-faced, their powerful builds cloaked in expensive fur coats. They stood with arms crossed, their backs against a closed subway door, and carried on an intermittent sideways conversation in Russian while methodically sizing up everyone who entered their immediate orbit. It wasn't these details that tipped me off—hypervigilance, after all, is a common phenomenon on the New York City subways—but the requisite touches of underworld dandyism: permed hair, gold chains visible past the fur collars, the profligate use of cheap aftershave.

Russians were not an unusual sight on the Brooklyn-bound F train. The line ends at Coney Island, adjacent to the waterfront community of Brighton Beach. Since the late 1970s, some 50,000 Russians have settled in this area—primarily Jewish refugees in the early days, but increasingly a polyglot of other ethnic groups from the former Soviet Union—making it the largest Russian émigré neighborhood in the Western Hemisphere and earning it the nickname "Little Odessa." I had

Photograph by James Hamilton

chanced upon the ebb and flow of this community at various times on the F train—the middle-aged women going to their early morning janitorial jobs in Manhattan, a few hours later the carefully groomed secretaries with their romance novels and Reeboks, in the evening the Orthodox Jews in their long black coats and fedoras returning from the garment and jewelry districts. The gangsters, however, were something new, and after that first sighting I began to see more and more of them. My curiosity was piqued; in the summer of 1994, I decided to explore their world.

Just in time too. From the sound of it, the Russians were taking over American organized crime. In magazines and newspapers across the United States, there had been an explosion of articles about the burgeoning Russian émigré mafias: they were establishing prostitution rings and protection rackets, hiring themselves out on murder-for-hire schemes, collaborating with the more venerable Cosa Nostra to make inroads into the heroin trade. Most terrifying of all were reports that they were in the R&D phase of an international black market in nuclear material, stolen from the fire-sale emporium that the Soviet Union had become. The American headquarters for this *Organizatsiya*, journalists and law enforcement officers seemed to agree, was Brighton Beach.

The specter of nuclear holocaust notwithstanding, the rise of the Brighton Beach godfathers appeared to be a fairly typical immigrant success story, one previously played out by the Italians, the Irish, the Chinese, and a half-dozen other ethnic groups that had settled in enclaves in America's larger cities. In the early days of Little Odessa, the Brighton Beach criminals had been two-bit thugs largely preying on their own, running numbers rackets, pyramid schemes, and loan-sharking operations.

No one took much notice until Marat Balagula, the owner of the Odessa Restaurant in Brighton Beach, put the Russian émigré underworld on the map in a big way. In the mid-1980s, Balagula teamed up with members of various Cosa Nostra crime families to pull off an elaborate gasoline distribution scheme that cost the government over $42 million a year in lost tax revenue.

When Balagula was finally locked up in 1989, Russian crime figures had already been introduced to the world of high finance and "real" mafiosi. The collapse of the Soviet Union and a second wave of Russian emigration to the United States in the early 1990s made the situation even worse. Whereas the early émigrés had been primarily Jews granted political asylum, now virtually anyone could obtain a Russian exit visa and slip into the country as a tourist; along with tens of thousands of bona fide refugees came an estimated 2,000 convicted criminals. Although Marat Balagula was out of the picture, it appeared that there was now a small army of excellent students to take his place.

"Spreading out from their base in Brighton Beach," Robert Friedman wrote in the January 1993 issue of *Vanity Fair*, "the Russians have pulled off the largest jewelry heist, and insurance and Medicare fraud, in American history, with a net haul exceeding $1 billion. They are importing heroin into the U.S. from Southeast Asia as well as from poppy fields around Chernobyl. . . . Through their control of gasoline terminals and distributorships in the New York metropolitan area and elsewhere, Russian mobsters evade as much as $5 billion a year in state and federal taxes, a portion of which goes as tribute to the Italian Mafia." Other journalists painted an equally ominous picture. "More and more Russian Mafiosi and their hired thugs are pouring into the United States," reported Andrew Meier in *Image* magazine in December 1993, "and expanding their murderous network into new markets at a rapid clip."

NO MATTER THEIR AGE OR ETHNICITY, GANGSTERS ARE REMARKABLY THE SAME

The statements of American law enforcement officials involved in tracking the Russian gangsters were even more alarming. "The Russian criminals are networking and developing much faster than any group I've seen in the United States," Jim Moody, the head of the FBI's organized crime section, announced at a Moscow news conference in 1993. "They're often highly educated, and now that they can get to the U.S. more easily, they've hit the ground running."

"You better believe the hype," an investigator for California's Soviet Organized Crime Intelligence Team had told Meier. "The Russians aren't coming anymore. They're here."

In meeting this new threat, the American government had gone "proactive." In January 1994, the Justice Department announced that it was placing the Russian mafia on the highest investigative priority status, on the same level as the Cosa Nostra and the Colombian cocaine cartels. The FBI opened a Moscow liaison office and formed specialized Russian Organized Crime (ROC) squads in New York and Los Angeles, complementing the new Russian-crime task forces being hastily established by a half-dozen state and local governments. A U.S. Senate subcommittee heard frightening testimony from a parade of experts on the growing power of the Russian crime syndicates.

[illegible] finding my own niche in all this, I sought out one of the preeminent authorities on the Brighton Beach gangsters. From his office on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, Alexandre Grant, news editor of *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*, the largest Russian-language newspaper in the United States, has had a bird's-eye view of the changing face of Brighton Beach. His newspaper has played a peripheral role in the underworld struggles being waged there: Brighton Beach con artists have used the *NRS* classifieds to advertise their scams, the FBI periodically buys space to run Russian-language appeals for information about the mafia, and its obituary page is frequently the first official notice that a new gangland rubout has taken place.

CAPITALISM HAD SEIZED HIS MIND; THE ONLY THING TO BE DECIDED WAS WHAT TO SELL

"You have to look at the language the family puts in," the genial, middle-aged editor explained. "If you see that a thirty-five-year-old man is dead, and they say he 'tragically died' during the night, you know he was murdered." Grant chuckled. "'Tragically died.' Everyone in Brighton Beach knows what this means."

At one time, Grant told me, there had been an element of cooperation among the godfathers, but that had collapsed beneath the crush of the second wave of emigrants. "Now no one trusts anyone else. The whole order has fallen down because there is no incentive to cooperate. If you want to kill a rival, all you have to do now is hire someone to come over from Moscow. For $2,000, they will fly in, do the job, then fly out again, and no one knows who they are. The situation is very fluid and very dangerous right now."

Grant brought out a folder of news clippings and 8 x 10 black-and-white photos, his chronicle of the rise and fall of a score of Brighton Beach thugs. In some of the photos, sullen men glowered into the camera—mug shots of still-active players—while photos showing smiling, relaxed men tended to mark those who had gone by the wayside, studio portraits selected by families to run on the *NRS* obituary page.

One photograph caught my attention. It was of a stern-faced, bearded man in his forties, with a strong jaw and prominent nose, staring directly into the camera. But his eyes were his most arresting feature. Beneath extremely thin eyebrows, they sloped dramatically downward. I was reminded of paintings of Genghis Khan.

"Yaponchik," Grant said. "His real name is Vyacheslav Ivankov, but everyone calls him Yaponchik—Little Japanese—because he looks Oriental. They say he is trying to organize the Brighton Beach mafias into one syndicate."

Grant dug through his sheaf of news clippings and handed me an AP news article from December 1993: "Moscow Underworld Boss Puts Down New Roots—In Brooklyn."

It seemed that with Little Japanese I had lucked into a key functionary in the *Organizatsiya* hierarchy. Arrested for robbery and sentenced in 1982 to fourteen years in a Siberian prison, the AP article explained, Ivankov had built a personal power base there and become a *vory v zakone* (thief in law), "an obscure old Russian term for a ceremonially installed criminal leader who decided disputes and divided spoils according to the thieves' 'law.'"

Released in 1991, Ivankov somehow managed to obtain both a passport and an American visa; he then settled in Brighton Beach—a source of great concern to police on both sides of the Atlantic.

"Dozens of 'thieves in law' run gangs across Russia," the AP reported, "but Yaponchik . . . has stood out among them. A leader of his stature controls a large region and possibly thousands of criminals through a dozen or so underbosses, [Russian] police say."

A weird nickname, a face out of Central Casting, a mysterious honorific, and a grand evil scheme to boot—Yaponchik had it all. When I asked Grant how to find him, however, the editor sighed. "He will not talk. I have tried, but he's always refused to say anything to the press. He's still pulling the triggers and at the levers, and the criminal law of the *vory v zakone* is to have no contact with the press. When he retires, maybe, but not now."

But Grant could see that his cautions were lost on me.

"He likes to eat in the Brighton Beach restaurants," he offered. "A lot of people say they have seen him walking on the boardwalk. If you want to find him, go to Brighton Beach."

Misha, drinking copious amounts of medicinal tea to ward off a suspected flu, began to complain bitterly about his lot in life within minutes of our first meeting at his Brighton Beach apartment.

"Always I am being cheated and taken advantage of," he said, holding a tissue to his nose. "And now it is affecting my health . . ."

Although Misha had a list of betrayals and failed business enterprises dating back years, his chief complaint at the moment was the sorry fate of his last project: an hour-long "documentary" on the changing role of women in post-Communist Russia and Ukraine. Having found investors to fund his research, Misha had been unable to sell the finished product.

"And now the investors are upset with me," Misha said, inserting the video into his VCR.

I saw the problem. While the subjects of Misha's documentary—a variety of young women in varying stages of undress, dancing and exercising to industrial disco music—displayed a certain exuberance, there appeared to have been a breakdown in production values: poor lighting, a jerky and unfocused camera. I also suspected that there might be some legal complications with the segment showing a group of underage schoolgirls lined up in a Kiev plaza, all fully clothed but eating bananas for the camera.

"So you see," Misha said, turning off the video, "there are very many businesses we can be doing together—films, books, so many cultural-exchange businesses."

For some reason, Misha had decided that a new economic alliance had been forged the moment I knocked on his apartment door. Capitalism had seized his mind and found there a particularly fecund garden, and the only thing to be decided was which commodity from his homeland we would peddle: medical cures, real estate, precious metals, girls; the entire country was on the auction block, and the time to strike, Misha kept repeating, was now. Whenever I reminded him of the comparatively narrow scope of my journalistic interests, he would nod and smile slyly, as if this were a fiction he would uphold for as long as I saw the need to maintain it. Finally, I steered the conversation to Ivankov, asked Misha if he knew how I might meet him.

"You mean the godfather Yaponchik?" He seemed momentarily alarmed, but then shrugged nonchalantly. "Yes, it is no problem to find him. We can be doing very many projects together on Yaponchik."

I decided to keep it vague. Misha would arrange a meeting with Ivankov; after that, I lied, I would give careful consideration to his various joint-venture ideas.

In the meantime, I set out to explore Brighton Beach. I usually began these explorations by taking the F train out to Coney Island and cutting through the seedy amusement park, past the forlorn-looking rides and roustabouts, to the boardwalk. Walking east along the shore, I would come to a point where the crowds of sunbathers and strolling teenage couples dissipated, a brief stretch where I had the boardwalk almost to myself, before reaching the edge of Brighton Beach and the beginnings of a very different crowd: elderly Russian women packed hip-to-hip on benches, wearing scarves and long dresses even at the zenith of summer, knots of men hunched over card tables and domino games, a sudden profusion of outdoor cafés with names in Cyrillic script.

I arrived as a tourist, certainly, but a special sort: the tourist-journalist, the morbid voyeur drawn to the darkness of a place even on a sunny afternoon. In those early days, Brighton Beach was like a vast museum to me, the repository of a hidden history, and I came to know where a few of the more interesting artifacts were. On the corner of Sixth Street and the boardwalk, I watched as workmen put the finishing touches on Naum Raichel's new Winter Garden Restaurant. Raichel was a Russian émigré who had gone to prison here in 1987 for extortion. Through the restaurant's large windows were neat rows of tables, chandeliers, and pleated napkins sticking out of wine glasses. Just a few days earlier, on the night of July 11, two unknown men had confronted Raichel around the corner and fired three bullets into his chest and stomach.



RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE HEADLINES AT A LITTLE ODESSA NEWSSTAND

Up on Brighton Beach Avenue, the main commercial strip of Little Odessa, I could almost pretend I had been transported a continent away to the Russia of my imagination: the Cyrillic signs of the pastry shops and shoe stores; the sidewalks taken over by old women selling knickknacks, *matrioska* dolls, and produce; the butcher shops with their great loops of sausage in the windows. Even the elevated D train track, which cast the avenue in permanent half-light, its cars clacking and screeching overhead at regular intervals, fit my image of Russia as a drab and dreary place.

But invariably I focused on the sidewalk before the Cafe Arbat, where Oleg Korataev's

Photograph by Stephen Ferry / Gamma Liaison

[illegible] left or on the solid facade of the National Restaurant, where one morning in May 1991 a gunman stepped into the foyer during the breakfast rush, passed beneath the gaudy chandelier and the framed photographs of Jackie Mason against the brocaded wallpaper, and entered the crowded dining room to put eight bullets into Emil Puzyretsky. This particular killing had already entered the realm of local folklore; I tended to doubt the stories about the waiter continuing to serve omelettes during the shooting but tended to believe those that told of extremely cooperative National patrons moving tables and chairs for the gunman as he scoured the carpet for his spent bullet casings.

In the side streets of the community, I became familiar with a half-dozen alleys and apartment building foyers where something ugly had happened—a tragedy for a family, a source of rumors for the neighbors, but for me one more anecdote in an observer's diary, another glimpse into the brutal and exotic world I was studying as if it were under glass. There was an element of distraction to these tours, for out of the corner of my eye I was always looking for someone. Among the domino players and boardwalk strollers but also in the hidden history of the place, I was ever watchful for the spectral image of Little Japanese.

THE CAFE ARBAT, A POPULAR LOCAL HANGOUT AND THE SITE OF OLEG KORATAEV'S DEMISE



Toward this end, I checked in with Misha periodically. "Our good fortune continues," he would announce. "There is no longer any question—a few last arrangements to be made and we are meeting Yaponchik."

Although reassuring at first, Misha's grand pronouncements—our breathtaking march of progress, the unbroken string of great strides forward, but always just one or two more unforeseen complications—began to remind me of an old Soviet Five Year Plan. It didn't help that others seemed to be bumping into Little Japanese with some regularity. Ivankov, the *New York Times* reported that August, "has been seen strolling on Emmons Avenue in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, and dining at the Rasputin, a nightclub in Brighton Beach, and at the Russian Samovar, a midtown Manhattan restaurant."

I was also becoming troubled by Misha's offhand but persistent suggestion that the ultimate success of "our Yaponchik project" would probably require an outlay of cash, but any attempt to put a dollar figure on this was met with a flippant wave from Misha—"impossible to say at this point"—before he swerved the conversation toward his newest roster of business proposals. There was something about importing pornographic Japanese comic books to the Crimea, something else about buying the deed to a copper mine in Kazakhstan.

"No need to make an agreement tonight," he would say at the end of these sales pitches, usually while raising a vodka glass in toast. "You are probably wanting to discuss these attractive offers with your magazine bosses."

Gradually I began to meet other raffish elements of the community, a succession of young men—most with crew cuts and tattooed biceps—who also offered to act as my guide through the Brighton Beach underworld. These prospective guides were expansive in discussing the past deeds of the *Organizatsiya*—or, at least, in recycling the old rumors—but chary when it came to describing the current scene. I also noticed in them a mirroring of Misha's first reaction whenever I mentioned my desire to meet Ivankov: a brief moment of consternation, a thoughtful gazing into space, and then the casual, confident shrug—"Yes, it is no problem; I can take you to Yaponchik." Always underlying these offers was the tacit understanding that such an endeavor would require money—possibly a very considerable sum of money—but, as with Misha, none of my newfound friends wished to sully our relationship with details.

As with any foreign culture, the longer I

Photograph by James Hamilton

stared at the Brighton Beach underworld, the more opaque it became. Beyond the folklore and sensational newspaper accounts—and the dramatic re-enactments in my own imagination—many of the killings that had occurred there began to take on a decidedly small-time quality the more I investigated them: a falling-out among petty thieves, a bar fight gone bad. And while the body count might have been alarming to someone in Iowa, say, it hardly constituted an epidemic by New York City standards.

What's more, if there was any signature to a Brighton Beach hit, it appeared to be a rather eerie streak of incompetence. Victims had a way of lingering on in hospital beds for days—or not dying at all. Where in all of this, I began to wonder, was the smooth hand of a professional *Organizatsiya*? And then there was the riddle of Yaponchik. If the authorities knew Ivankov was in New York, why was he being allowed to operate with such impunity? Why, with so many sightings of him in the nightclubs and on the boulevards of New York—sightings of such frequency that at times it seemed the man had cloned himself—were the authorities never able to find him?

"Because no one's looking for him," Peter Grinenko said. "He's not wanted for anything. All Ivankov's doing is working a hustle, and he's not going to get busted for that, because everyone wants to believe it. You want me to tell you about Ivankov and the *Organizatsiya*? Okay, I'll tell you: it's all bullshit."

It wasn't a very convincing statement coming from Grinenko; with his massive barrel chest and small angry eyes, he looked a lot like a mafioso himself. Except that Grinenko, a native Russian speaker, had been a New York City detective for twenty-three years and was now a part-time investigator for the Brooklyn district attorney, specializing in Russian crime cases. He was also something of a pariah on the Russian émigré crime-fighting circuit. It was easy to see why: within moments of our first meeting, he had launched into an angry diatribe—liberally scattered with scatological references—on various state and local law enforcement agencies, whole branches of the federal government, journalists in general.

"What you've got in Brighton Beach," Grinenko said, "are a bunch of two-bit hustlers. You've got junkies ripping each other off, you've got a few punks fighting over their little rackets, and you've got a whole mess of people—old ladies, doctors, housewives—ripping off the state. This is organized crime?"

As one of the only native Russian speakers in the New York City police force, Grinenko started getting pulled onto Brighton Beach duty with the first wave of Soviet emigration in the late 1970s. Over the years, he has been at least peripherally involved in nearly every major law enforcement operation launched in the émigré community.

"And after every operation," he said, "I look at what the newspapers say and I can't recognize it. Two fuck-ups get arrested at JFK with a couple of kilos of heroin, and suddenly everyone's talking about how the Russians are setting up the next Cali cartel. Last year, a dozen guys get busted with some [illegal] slot machines, and it's 'the Russian mafia is taking over the gambling industry.'"

"YES, IT IS NO PROBLEM," I WAS ALWAYS TOLD. "I CAN TAKE YOU TO YAPONCHIK"

Grinenko held up a finger a few inches from my face. "Now, there's one kind of crime that the Russkies are very good at, better than anyone else in the world: fraud. And that's what Ivankov is." He chuckled derisively. "Let me tell you about Ivankov's big life of crime." Ivankov, Grinenko said, stole a car in 1980 and tried to extort ransom for it. "When he went to collect, he was busted. That was Ivankov's big crime. This guy is a mafia godfather? Forget about it."

After that meeting with Grinenko, I went back to my collection of Brighton Beach articles, to the ones I had glided over before, the small, insignificant items tucked away in the back pages of newspaper Metro sections. There was the occasional robbery and auto theft, of course, but what emerged was a consistent and overwhelming pattern of fraud. Sophia Perett, director of the nonprofit Center for Russian Immigrants in Brighton Beach, and her husband, Henrich Barel, arrested for fraud and trafficking in phony Social Security cards and birth certificates. Boris Bronshteyn and Vladimir Slobodsky of I & S Surgical Supply, indicted on charges of bilking Medicaid for $727,000 worth of nonexistent orthotic back supports. Five Russian doctors—along with thirty-five of their patients—nabbed in a bizarre Metropolitan Transportation Authority sting; the doctors had sold false disability notes to their patients, enabling them to ride the subway for half price. The continuum of fraud extended from the hapless penny-ante practitioners who had found their way onto the local police blotter even to the most celebrated of the mafiosi: Marat Balagula and his gasoline-tax fraud, the Shmushkevich brothers and their $1 billion medical-insurance swindle in California.

In the Brighton Beach émigré community, I began to see, were many who had been shaped by seventy years of misrule, who had learned to lie, cheat, and steal in order to survive. I now understood Misha and his fellow Brighton Beach "tour guides" as newly hybridized men—half socialist, half capitalist—frantically seeking to find their way in a strange new world where everything was a potential commodity, everyone was a potential mark, a bountiful land that offered endless opportunity for those with the gall to exploit it. I had been just such a mark, for I had come to Brighton Beach as a buyer—in the market for Little Japanese and the *Organizatsiya*, thieves in law and gangland informants—and they had done their best to sell me.

I HAD COME TO BUY THIEVES AND INFORMANTS AND THEY HAD DONE THEIR BEST TO SELL ME

Here, I felt, was finally the answer to the Yaponchik riddle. He had remained a legendary figure because it was lucrative to do so.

With a certain smugness, I watched the Yaponchik myth continue to grow. In February 1995, the *Washington Post* put his photograph on its front page and used his story to illustrate the "extraordinary growth of Russian organized crime." The following month, CNN joined in with an alarming "Special Assignment" report on the newcomers to the American underworld, linking the Russians to "extortion, prostitution, insurance fraud, guns, heroin, money laundering, murder for hire." At the climactic moment, the old, familiar photograph of Yaponchik filled the television screen.

"From New York to Los Angeles to Miami," the reporter intoned, "this is the man from Moscow who [federal] agents say has come to take control of the Russian mob: Vyacheslav Ivankov."

He was also, quite suddenly, becoming a personality. In the pages of the *Washington Post*, Ivankov was "a man who tended carefully to his appearance, favoring a dapper little kerchief tucked neatly in his suit pocket," the master criminal who had escaped capture and prosecution with "fast cars and smart lawyers." On CNN, the ubiquitous Alexandre Grant offered that Ivankov liked music, drank in moderation, and was "very good with girls." And as Yaponchik's public image grew, so did his résumé; now his biography filled out with a host of colorful and conflicting—new incarnations: crime boss of Vladivostok, "the father of Soviet extortion," kingpin of all Soviet Far East Asia; mentor to Otari Kvantrishvili, the godfather of Moscow's Solntsevskaya crime syndicate; close [illegible] and underworld confederate of Yuri Churbanov, Leonid Brezhnev's son-in-law.

"Certainly he's the biggest [Russian mafia] figure that we've seen or heard of yet here in the United States," DEA administrator Thomas Constantine told CNN, an analysis reiterated by Alexandre Grant: "Ivankov now is number one."

The only thing missing in all this was the same component that had been missing all along: hard facts. No one writing or broadcasting the Ivankov story had actually interviewed him or independently verified his criminal background. Rather, they were simply parroting the vague pronouncements of the FBI and other federal agents who, in turn, appeared to be recycling information supplied by the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, or MVD, an offshoot of the old KGB. If nothing else, this suggested a remarkable change of heart by both the American media and government in the post–Cold War era: in five years the Soviet intelligence services had gone from symbolizing all that was dark and treacherous in the Soviet Union to being trustworthy sources for both news stories and federal investigations.

I made these observations with a faintly sanctimonious pleasure, rather like the man who has already been duped in a game of three-card monte shaking his head at the craven stupidity of new victims. But then something unexpected happened: Yaponchik emerged from the shadows at last.

The long, strange story of Vyacheslav Ivankov finally reached its denouement in the offices of Summit International, an investment-advisory company based in New York. As with the rest of the Yaponchik story, however, there was nothing simple about the conclusion.

Despite its prosperous-sounding name, Summit International was a decidedly modest operation established by two Russian émigrés, Alexander Volkov and Vladimir Voloshin, who had found their market niche in servicing the flight of capital from the chaos of Russia. In November 1994, the company officers were visited by two Moscow "businessmen," Roustam Sadykov and Maxim Korostishevsky, who had come to collect 60 percent of a $2.7 million investment made by a third party, now deceased; for their cooperation, Volkov and Voloshin could keep the other 40 percent and be free of any future "aggravation."

But the Summit executives balked at the offer. For the next several months, they stalled for time, enduring a series of increasingly angry and threatening calls and visits from the Russian visitors. Things turned ominous on the afternoon of February 21. Shortly before a scheduled 5:30

meeting with their pursuers, Volkov and Voloshin panicked and fled the Summit offices. From behind the plate-glass window of a store across the street, they watched Sadykov and Korostishevsky arrive with a man they recognized from newspaper photographs: Vyacheslav Ivankov. That was enough for the Summit executives. Fearing for their lives, they hastily packed up their families and fled to Miami. They also went to the FBI.

"They were very frightened, very concerned," recalled Raymond Kerr, the special agent in charge of the FBI's ROC squad—or C-24—in New York. "With Ivankov appearing on the scene, they sensed they were in serious trouble."

The FBI, which had been intermittently watching Ivankov since early 1993, now intensified their effort. By the end of March, they had placed a wiretap on Ivankov's cellular phone and were cataloguing the involvement of a half-dozen lesser-known Russian émigrés—"mutts," in FBI parlance—in the attempted Summit shakedown.

It appeared that Ivankov had signed on with a particularly hapless bunch. Despite his persistent admonitions to be circumspect, his co-conspirators were in the habit of discussing their plans on the phone. All showed a rather quaint willingness to believe the Summit officers' promises of settlement even as the officers stayed on the move and broke one scheduled appointment after another. After Volkov failed to show at yet another meeting, this time at Manhattan's Russian Samovar restaurant on April 19, Sadykov complained about him to the Samovar waiters, saying that he was stranded in the United States because Volkov owed him thousands of dollars. Even Ivankov began to complain.

"I have lots of people around me and things to do," he told Sadykov at one point. "I did not want to be on the phone all the time. I'm being pulled in all directions."

In late April the patience of the would-be extortionists apparently ran out. On a Moscow train station platform, Vladimir Voloshin's elderly father was set upon by thugs and severely beaten; he died from his injuries within the week. To the Summit officers, this was a brutal indication that their protracted cat-and-mouse game was over. On the evening of May 25, they were taken to the Troika Restaurant in Fairview, New Jersey, where Sadykov waited in an upstairs office with a bit of dispiriting news: instead of 60 percent of the $2.7 million, he now wanted 100 percent of $3.5 million. Before the night was out, the Summit executives had signed a promissory note, agreeing to pay Sadykov that amount in nine installments over the next two months.

As if this wasn't going to be painful enough, the terms soon changed again. On June 5, Volkov and Voloshin were summoned to another meeting, this one presided over by Ivankov. Ivankov explained that the first payment was to be made not in a week's time but by 2:00 P.M. the following day. For the undercover FBI team working the case, it was time to move.

"This might not have been the way we would have preferred to take this case down," explained Raymond Kerr, the agent in charge of the operation, "but our hand was forced because of threats to some people."

The wait had been well worth it for investigators. Throughout the shakedown effort, Ivankov had remained carefully in the background—never personally confronting the Summit officers, conspicuously absent from the conclave at the Troika—and investigators had compiled only a thin string of circumstantial evidence against him. That all changed with the June 5 meeting. At the last moment, Yaponchik had stepped into the open and handed his pursuers the rope they had so desperately sought.

At 7:00 A.M. on Thursday, June 8, arresting FBI agents pounded on the door of a Brighton Beach apartment to be greeted by a bleary-eyed Ivankov, clad in underwear and a black T-shirt. In contrast to his reputation in the media for courtliness and charm, the fabled Yaponchik kicked and spat at reporters when led into court for a preliminary hearing.

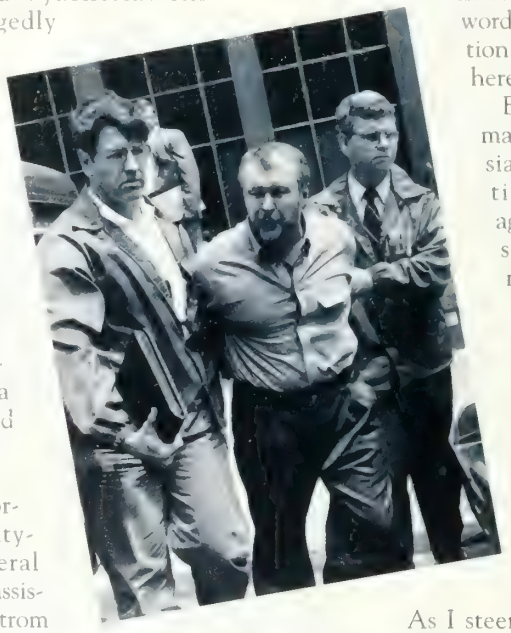


THE RASPUTIN, A NIGHTCLUB SAID TO BE FREQUENTED BY YAPONCHIK

Photograph by James Hamilton

disappointing. Although five of the low-level accomplices were collared, the two principal architects of the Summit extortion—Roustam Sadykov and Maxim Korostishevsky—had slipped back to Russia just days earlier. Still, the FBI had Yaponchik, and this was enough to warrant a triumphant press release:

"In a major move against a growing Russian organized crime structure in the United States, the FBI today arrested Vyacheslav Kirillovich Ivankov, allegedly one of the most powerful Russian crime leaders in this country. . . . The FBI described the arrests as a significant step toward stemming the efforts of major Russian criminal organizations and a key example of the newly-developed law enforcement cooperation between Russia and the United States."



YAPONCHIK IN FBI CUSTODY

From his spacious corner office on the twenty-eighth floor of 26 Federal Plaza in New York, FBI assistant director James Kallstrom has a spectacular view not only of upper Manhattan and portions of New Jersey but, on a clear day, the Long Island Sound and the Connecticut coastline. In the conference corner of the room, there is a low coffee table upon which sits a piece of highly polished brown granite with a small metal label: "Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, April 19, 1995."

As the special agent in charge of the New York regional office, Kallstrom first started seeing the Russians show up on law enforcement radar in the early 1990s. "We saw a problem and the potential for that problem to get worse, and that is why we moved so quickly to establish a Russian squad. Our philosophy was to contain it, to not let it gain a foothold the way [the Cosa Nostra] did in the Fifties and Sixties."

A big, affable man in his early fifties, Kallstrom takes a rather long view on the battle against organized crime in émigré communities, seeing it as a hearts-and-minds campaign to win over the populace.

"We're in the information business," he said. "Theoretically, we could just sit here and answer the phone and get all the information we need if the people who knew would tell it to us. Well, we don't get it all that way, so we have to do other things. You go to Brighton Beach, or to any émigré community where people are less familiar with the way things are done in the United States, where they're not sure they can trust law enforcement, and you can see crime thriving in those areas. The real challenge we face is Americanizing them to the extent that justice can work. By taking out Ivankov, a major criminal back in Russia, we are putting the word out that we will take action, that the system of justice here prevails."

But was Ivankov, in fact, a major criminal back in Russia? I asked. Kallstrom motioned to the other FBI agent at the meeting, ROC squad commander Raymond Kerr.

"That's certainly the way it was told to us," Kerr said. "A representative of the MVD told us exactly that, that Ivankov was sent here to organize the Russian criminals in North America, not just the United States but North America."

As I steered the conversation into the specifics of the Summit extortion case, Kerr became increasingly circumspect, constrained both by the limits of what could be said before the case went to trial and by the gaps that remained in the investigation. He admitted to being a bit disappointed that the operation hadn't been allowed to run a while longer, but he was generally pleased with the outcome.

"Obviously, we would have preferred to wait and learn more about the structure and then taken it apart, but we couldn't do that in this case, so you can say we ended up with Ivankov and essentially a bunch of mutts. But like any organization, the top management people are the ones you want to take out to destroy it. It's no different from entering a battlefield. You talk to a tanker, what do they look for? They look for the tank with all the antennas on it, and that's the first one they want to take out. That's the same way we do it."

James Kallstrom nodded.

"The arrest of Ivankov is much more important than the case itself—geometrically more important than the case itself—because it sends a message into that community. We need the honest citizens out there to tell us what the hell is going on, and that has already started

Photograph by Chang Lee / NYT Pictures

happening since we got Ivankov. Now there are people in those communities who understand we will take action, because they have seen the giant fall."

A funny choice of words, for the first thing that struck me when Ivankov was led into Judge Carol Amon's chambers in the U.S. District Courthouse in Brooklyn on the morning of June 23 was how tiny he was: about five foot four and maybe 150 pounds. No one I had spoken to, nothing I had read, ever mentioned that. Standing alongside his celebrity lawyer, the tall and rail-thin Barry Slotnick, I was reminded less of Genghis Khan than of Mutt and Jeff.

Still, he was an imposing figure: compact, muscular, the peculiar, downward slope of his eyes given an added severity by his crew cut and close-cropped beard. Sitting alone as he waited his brief turn before the judge, he seemed to withdraw into himself, staring into space with a slight, distracted frown, as if trying to remember something. Only occasionally would he glance at the gallery, acknowledging with an almost imperceptible nod the waves of the two attractive Russian women who attended all the preliminary hearings. Several times he caught me staring at him and briefly stared back, without curiosity, before gazing into space again.

I suppose I was hoping for some telltale sign that would finally reveal who Ivankov was. He looked like a criminal, of course—anyone dressed in prison blues does—but I still harbored doubts about his godfather status. Rather than be assuaged, these doubts had only grown since my meeting with the FBI, since I read their account of the Summit extortion case.

Just how intimate a role had Yaponchik played in the plot? The shakedown attempt had begun in November 1994, but Ivankov didn't physically appear on the scene until three months later. The "contract" signed at the Troika was for payments to Sadykov, not Ivankov.

While it seemed clear that he had played some role in the conspiracy, this merely raised a larger question: why? Why had this master *vory v zakone*, the warlord of a vast criminal empire, worked so hard and put himself at such risk for the 10 or 15 percent commission he would collect on a piddling $3.5 million deal?

But watching Ivankov in Judge Amon's courtroom, I finally saw that all along I had been asking the wrong questions, that viewing everything from the perspective of a journalist—searching for facts and documentation and plausibility—I had missed what was important in the Yaponchik story. An entirely different perspective was required, for I had entered a shadow world where cops, journalists, and gangsters exist and maneuver in a complex symbiosis. In this world, there was no separating myth from reality; myth and reality were the same thing.

Ivankov *was* a mafia godfather because it served everyone's interest that he be one. It gave the media a frame, a way to personalize stories about a complex issue. It gave the FBI a symbol to take down, a tool with which to convince the Russian émigré community that justice would prevail. It gave the Summit extortionists the necessary fear factor with which to shake down their victims. And, not least of all, it gave Ivankov the necessary status and cachet to be called upon as muscle in the first place.

"Seems to me you got two possible explanations," said Peter Grinenko after Ivankov's arrest. "Either the guy just didn't understand the way all this works in America, or he's a fucking idiot. As soon as the Feds started talking about him being this big *vory v zakone* badass and the press started putting him in silk suits, he should have seen that he was going to get whacked. Instead, it turned his head. He's done crime the hard way his whole life in Russia, so he thinks, 'Hey, I'm a big mafia boss now, I can start making money the easy way.' So he rides the crest of being a badass, uses it to his advantage to come in on the [Summit] deal, and the Feds are waiting for him. Now it's Yaponchik's turn, and he's going to get fucked."

THE FABLED YAPONCHIK KICKED AND SPAT AT REPORTERS WHEN LED INTO COURT

A few weeks after Ivankov's arrest, I met up with Misha, and we went for a stroll on the Brighton Beach boardwalk. He seemed happier, more relaxed, than I'd ever seen him. Better dressed too. I wondered if it had anything to do with the Podiatry Project. I'd heard through mutual acquaintances that Misha had teamed up with an unscrupulous Russian podiatrist, and together they were bilking Medicaid for enough foot casts and crutches to hobble a good portion of the Brooklyn citizenry. That was the rumor, anyway. When I tried to pry, Misha simply shrugged and smiled mischievously.

"Some businesses are happening, some market successes."

The conversation eventually turned to Ivankov. Like many in the Russian émigré community, Misha was now openly scornful of Yaponchik, convinced that no true *vory v zakone* would have involved himself in something as stupid and clumsy as the Summit deal.

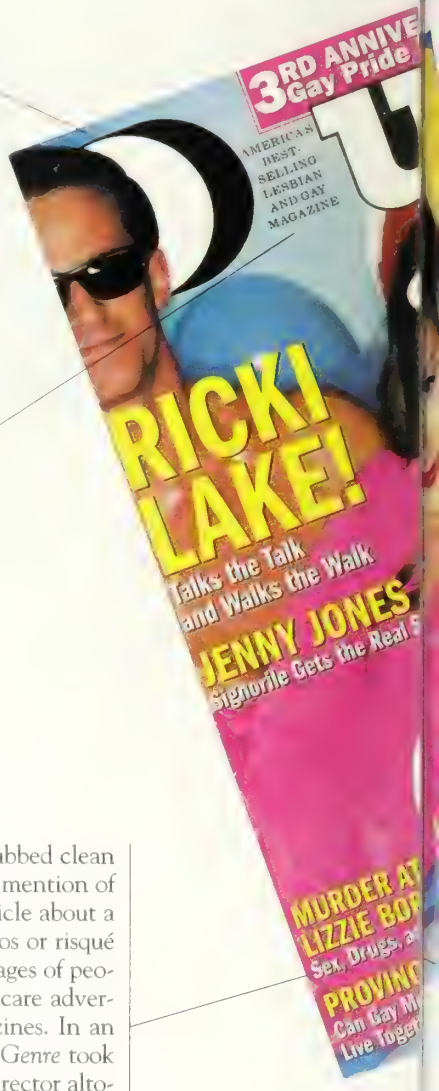
"From the beginning, I was suspecting he is a fraud," he said, giving a dismissive flip of his hand. "How fortunate we were not committing our resources." ■

OUT OF THE CLOSET, ANI

The new gay magazines gloss over p

There's good news for gay Americans these days, and it comes in colorful, monthly installments. Slick, upbeat, glossy gay magazines have arrived over the last few years, pitching the "gay lifestyle." These aren't like the old gay magazines—edgy, alternative publications that focused primarily on political rights. In the new gay glossies, such concerns are lost amid fashion spreads, hair-care products, and Club Med packages. Doing their best to mimic *Details* or *Vanity Fair*, magazines such as *Out*, *Genre*, *Men's Style*, and *10 Percent* present endless images of well-adjusted gay bohemians, frolicking in a utopian never-never land where homosexuals are no longer persecuted or self-loathing. But today, as the political climate for gay rights grows colder—as state after state proposes gay-discrimination bills, reaffirms archaic antisodomy statutes, and disqualifies lesbian mothers as unfit parents—these glossies are but fantasy literature, mood enhancers for a demoralized movement.

With a circulation of 120,000, *Out* leads the pack. But it's not circulation that keeps these magazines afloat—it's ad dollars. In these pages you'll find ads for American Express, Virgin Atlantic Airways, and Apple PowerBooks, a sign that corporations are finally mustering the courage to target what the *Wall Street Journal* calls the "dream market"—upscale gay consumers, particularly the so-called DINKs (dual income, no kids). Indeed, gays and lesbians have impressive demographics: their average household income of $47,000 a year is 12 percent higher than for most Americans. *Out*'s media kit raves about the "free-spending" habits of these hungry hedonists; with no kids but a lot of hang-ups, they're "image-conscious," "style-conscious," "health-conscious," and ready to burn gay dollars. *Out* wants to get in on the deal: it's not so much a magazine as a market-penetration device.



The picture of gay life here is a sanitized one, scrubbed clean of overt sexuality and unseemly images. The only mention of sex comes in the subtitle of a less than steamy article about a homicidal lesbian. Inside, there are no nude photos or risqué personal ads. The most conspicuous omission? Images of people with AIDS. Pictures of wasted bodies would scare advertisers and destroy the giddy mood of these magazines. In an interview with the late filmmaker Derek Jarman, *Genre* took the unusual step of omitting photographs of the director altogether, tactfully describing him as "frail." Even *Poz*, the magazine devoted to those living with HIV, avoids photographs of diseased pariahs and instead showcases HIV-positive athletes with ruddy, gym-buffed physiques.

TO NEVER-NEVER LAND

enetrate a market, *by Daniel Harris*

Gay culture has long doted on Hollywood icons (Bette Davis, Judy Garland), but the new glossies are positively starstruck. Celebrities are recruited for more than gossip and glamour—they're asked to show their gay credentials, to prove that they are gay-friendly. Whether it's Ricki Lake assuring *Out* readers that she's a "nice, sweet fag hag" or pop singer Nina Hagen telling *10 Percent* that she "would jump through fire" to help gay people, celebrities are constantly conferring their benedictions on the readers. This fixation on celebrities' feelings about homosexuality reflects a larger dynamic that has taken hold in gay culture: the notion that liberation lies not with politicians but with pop stars, the moral vanguard in American society. Gays are now betting that the concrete social changes they have failed to realize through conventional legal methods can be achieved by riding the coattails of mass culture; if Newt Gingrich won't help you, try Elton John.



The articles on film director Gus Van Sant and playwright Arthur Laurents are examples of a type of feature that figures prominently in the new gay glossies: the profile in courage—not political courage but the courage of those "making it." The editors habitually sing the praises of enterprising homosexuals who have clambered to the top of the corporate ladder and now lead prosperous lives as openly gay executives, fashion designers, investment gurus, pulp novelists, and soap-opera stars. Such rags-to-riches parables of the "velvet mafia" transform the new glossies into an oddly religious sort of inspirational literature and cunningly present money-making as a responsible form of activism, a means of seizing the reins of power. Social climbing is more than just profitable; it's a way of blazing the trail to a more equitable and homosympathetic society.

Although the words "gay" and "lesbian" appear on the cover a total of six times, it is quite possible that someone browsing through the magazines at a newsstand would mistake *Out*'s June issue for a straight publication. The crowning irony of the new glossies is that they shamelessly imitate mainstream publications while insisting on the need to cover, as *Genre* puts it, the "people and stories that the general media has long overlooked." In fact, it is the new gay magazines that are doing the overlooking—glossing over the problems of a subculture ravaged by AIDS, splintered by ideological differences, and frustrated by political stagnation. The editors of these magazines, however, are betting their readers won't notice.

Daniel Harris's last piece for Harper's Magazine, *"Making Kitsch from AIDS," appeared in the July 1994 issue. He is working on a book about gay culture to be published by Hyperion.*

WHAT REMAINS

The lure of relics in a faithless age

By Kathryn Harrison



Earlier this year Guernsey's, a New York City auction house, sponsored an event advertised as "the greatest rock and roll auction of all time." Among the 4,000 items consigned for sale were electric guitars played by Jimi Hendrix and Paul McCartney; previously unseen photographs of Janis Joplin, Mick Jagger, and Patti Smith; rare acetate recordings by Elvis Presley and personal effects including clothing, jewelry, drawings, lyrics scrawled on notebook paper, even old bath towels. I am not a collector of rock memorabilia, but I attended the auction's preview in Manhattan's Puck Building because I wanted to look at three items mentioned on the local news the previous evening.

As it turned out, the three things I wanted to see were the same requested over and over by successive TV crews that I watched enter the Puck Building's ballroom and consult the young woman with the clipboard who was handling public relations. She smiled extravagantly as she pointed out potential objects of interest, but the eyes of the reporters glanced off all but the three, as described by the auction catalogue: B34A, "Washbasin from the apartment of John Lennon, the Dakota (72nd and Central Park West), New York City"; E257E, "Elvis Presley owned and used rechargeable Remington Razor . . . in original box"; and G126A, the "left-handed sunburst Stratocaster . . . smashed on stage by [Kurt] Cobain" and bearing "remnants of blood from Cobain's fingers on the pickguard."

Waiting my turn behind the television crews, I watched as one and then another cameraman stepped up to the late Mr. Lennon's sink and, balancing unsteadily on a box or stool, contrived to point the lens of his video camera into the sink's drain. Then I got my chance to examine the sink; a Kohler wall-mount with two stainless-steel legs and shiny clean faucet

Kathryn Harrison is the author of the novels Thicker Than Water, Exposure, *and* Poison. *Her last piece for* Harper's Magazine, *"Seeking Rapture," appeared in the September 1994*

Illustration by Thomas Woodruff

nd knobs, it was unremarkable.

But, wait, what was that? Between he hygienically smooth white orcelain and the polished stainless-teel collar that circled the orifice of he drain was a narrow but definite and of brown crud. This residue, ug out with a fingernail or pin, ould not have filled a teaspoon. Vhat of John Lennon might have een preserved in the crevice encir-ling his washbasin's drain? What agment of hair or skin, what mole-ule of saliva, mucus, possibly even lood, vomit, or piss? Anyone con-dering the purchase was assured hat the plumbing was accompanied y an "affidavit verifying the circum-tances" from the "gentleman who id the repairs and retained the sink ffered herein."

Perhaps whoever bought the sink, he opening bid for which was set at 6,000, has now collected and swal-owed the dried sink scum, just as isitors to Goa, on the west coast of ndia, have bitten off two of the toes f Saint Francis Xavier, who died in 552 and whose body, subsequently nshrined in the Portuguese colony, ontinues to draw crowds of pilgrims nd miracle seekers. It is not an im-lausible idea. Who we consider oly changes over the centuries; what we want from them has not.

After her cremation, my own randmother's ashes were returned o me by the Dunn Funeral Home in white cardboard box bearing a yel-ow label whose return address was hat of Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery. Inside the white box was thick black plastic one whose lid I ried at with a knife until it opened vith a loud crack to reveal a olyurethane bag closed with a red wist tie, the kind that bakeries use. I ook the bag out and held it in my ap. An average-sized human is said o yield seven pounds of cremated emains, about the weight of a cat, a umber of which my grandmother ad raised and pampered. The ashes elt as heavy as one of her pets but vere cool. A certificate of cremation ccompanying the bag bore this rub-er-stamped message: VANDALISM FEE COLLECTED. This struck me as some-what cryptic, but I guessed it was one of several supposed assurances that the ashes I held were indeed those of my grandmother, whose corpse was assigned a serial number by Green-Wood Cemetery, C 27594, that was inscribed on the boxes and all pertinent documents and stamped onto a coin I found among the ashes themselves when I opened the bag.

Ashes aren't so much ashes as fragments of burned bone, some large enough that I could observe the elegant tracery of the marrow's canals. These looked like lace, some white, others the color of rust; the rest was a fine gray dust that adhered to my fingers as I sifted through the remains. I withdrew my hand from the bag, sucked one finger, and felt the grit between my teeth. I licked the other fingers and my palm as well. Tasting what was left of my grandmother—a woman made holy to me by love and by blood—was something I did alone, behind the closed door to my study. The privacy of the act was not born of shame but of its being sacred: a last intimacy between two women who, in turn, had diapered each other. The following week, I poured the rest of her ashes into the sea; some were thrown back at me by the wind so that they stung my eyes and dusted my arms. I kept the bag within its two boxes and have occasionally pressed my face into it and inhaled.

I WITHDREW MY HAND FROM THE ASHES, SUCKED ONE FINGER, AND FELT THE GRIT BETWEEN MY TEETH, TASTING WHAT WAS LEFT OF MY GRANDMOTHER—A LAST INTIMACY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN WHO, IN TURN, HAD DIAPERED EACH OTHER

What did I want from my grandmother's ashes? I have her temperament, I bear her features. Taking a little of her inside of me was not so much a superstitious reflex as it was a kind of communion: a private Eucharist, albeit one many might judge profane.

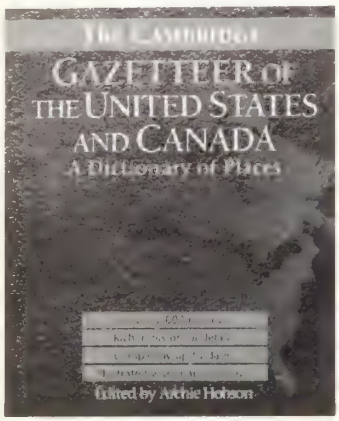
The acquisition and veneration of relics reflect a primitive longing, one that has been carried forward from prehistory and has taken forms as various as cannibalism and Buddhism. Among cannibals, some are selective to the point that they eat a bit of brain for wisdom or heart for courage, supplements they hope will help them overcome their enemies in much the same way we expect iron supplements to defend us from anemia.

Even religions that are generally understood to eschew connection to the material world and to the body venerate the remains of the dead. In Yangon, Myanmar (formerly Burma), construction of a great pagoda is under way. The building will enshrine one of the four teeth plucked from the Lord Buddha's cremation pyre in 483 B.C.; on some weekends thousands line up at the construction site to offer the gift of their labor. During the Middle Ages, Christian pilgrimages to shrines such as Spain's Santiago de Compostela (where, legend holds, the Apostle James was buried after Herod executed him in 42 A.D.) were undertaken as journeys whose destinations were more spiritual than geographic. Such pilgrimages had their precedent in a long-standing classical tradition of travel to the site of important shrines, those housing either first-class, or corporeal, remains or what are called second-class, or representative, relics, personal items such as Achilles' spear, which is kept in the temple of Athena at Phaselis.

If we no longer expect the tomb of a hero to guarantee a town heavenly protection, it still offers economic solace. Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee, on whose grounds Elvis is buried, draws 700,000 tourists each year, 40,000 on the anniversary of his death. Cooperstown, New York,

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fans crowds to the National Baseball Hall of Fame, which enshrines Babe Ruth's glove, Ty Cobb's sliding pads, and the bat used by Mickey Mantle to hit a 565-foot home run. The New York Public Library owns pieces of Percy Shelley's skull. Yale's Beinecke Collection includes a chamber pot used by FDR when he visited the university to receive an honorary degree. Americans who visit such reliquaries are doing what humans have always done: attempting to draw close to the sacred.

All of us persist against reason in believing that some manifestation of the dead's personality or spirit remains in his or her corpse, and our faith extends to include the dead's possessions, especially those objects that routinely come into direct contact with the body: clothing and tools used for eating or for grooming. At the auction preview, Elvis Presley's "Selektronic" razor, displayed in its original box lined with ersatz red velvet, and valued in the catalogue at $4,000, did indeed appear to have been used. The shaving head was dusted with what looked like skin and hair particles, and the corners of the box were gray with the same fine accumulation. Three days after I saw Presley's Remington, late-night talk show host Conan O'Brien taped a segment at the auction and was quoted by the *New York Times* as having said, "Maybe I'll buy Elvis's electric shaver. I'll open it up and look for stubble and then auction it off, hair by hair." It was a joke, but a serious one. Just as the Catholic Church attempts to protect the corpses of saints from the kind of worshipful abuses visited on Francis Xavier's feet, displaying holy remains behind iron grilles or under glass, so Elvis's razor was locked in a case, the glass door of which was smeared with greasy handprints and fogged with breath; one cameraman wiped it off before he began videotaping.

A few miles uptown from the Puck Building, New York City's Mother Cabrini shrine houses what is described in one guidebook as the "mummy" of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first United States citizen to have been canonized. The shrine is in a chapel on the campus of Mother Cabrini High School. A religious gift shop serves as an antechamber and carries an assortment of pious trash familiar to those who frequent such concessions: tiny plastic squirt bottles filled with holy water, rosaries and laminated felt scapulars made in the Philippines, statuettes, pocket prayer books, votive candles. But the Cabrini gift shop also functions as a mini-museum, its walls lined with the kind of display cases that elsewhere in the high school might hold team trophies or biology specimens. Through their glass doors visitors can examine Frances Cabrini's personal articles, among them a tightly coiled gold spring, approximately two inches long. Presented with it is a Xerox copy of a handwritten letter that begins, "My father, Hugo Ragaini, felt gravely honored to have been fortunate enough to make dentures for Mother Cabrini. When she came to him in 1914 to have new dentures made, she told him to keep the gold spring which came from the original dentures she had made in France. . . ." (Before dentures were fixed in place by adhesive cream, springs were used to keep uppers from falling closed onto lowers.) The letter goes on to describe a miracle of healing attributed to Mother Cabrini's denture spring, which the signer, Victor Ragaini, hereby bequeaths to the saint's shrine as a token of his gratitude.

Cabrini's physical remains are laid in a glass coffin that forms the base for the main altar of her chapel. The top is marble, but you can see the saint through the coffin's sides. If you've seen the Disney version of *Snow White*, the casket looks very much like the one in which the dwarfs preserve their beloved housekeeper until her prince can come to wake her. This iconographic resemblance may be disturbing, but it is not accidental, for it is in anticipation of the Prince of Peace's resurrecting kiss that Frances Cabrini waits in preternatural sleep. The Church's use of symbols is determined by their potency, not their source, and many elements of fairy tales have been appropriated into

hagiography. Saint Cabrini wears a gold crown; her face and hands project from a deflated, seemingly empty black habit. Below its hem, her shoes stick up and eerily recall another fantasy image. You suspect that were you to remove them, the saint's toes would shrivel, curl, and draw up under her habit.

Crouched by the casket on my hands and knees, I examined Mother Frances's hands and face. I wasn't prepared to accept her remains as being supernaturally incorrupt, but what I could see of her looked to be a remarkable embalming job. The side of the coffin was fogged with my nervous breath. Clearly, visitors were not expected to approach the saint so intimately, and, afraid of being found prostrated next to Frances with nothing but a pane of glass between us, I returned to the gift shop, presided over by a taciturn nun.

"Is the body under the altar really Mother Cabrini?" I asked, beginning my question boldly but swallowing its last words. The nun made no response. She was one of those people who blink less frequently than the rest of us.

"What I mean to say is—" I paused. "Is what I see in the casket really Saint Cabrini?"

"Yes," said the nun. From behind the cash register, she crossed her arms over her habit.

"So the, uh, face and the hands, they aren't, uh—?" I was thinking *wax*, but the nun's impassive expression didn't allow me to utter the word.

"That's her," said the nun. I found it impossible to look her in the eye. My gaze ascended only as far as the obligatory spinster's mustache that softened the hard set of her lips. The phone in the gift shop rang, and when she turned to answer it I left. Later, I learned that the saint's remains, exhumed in 1933 for examination by a papal commission, had been placed within a wax effigy five years later.

In the early Church, the Eucharist was commonly celebrated over the remains of a saint. The cult of martyrs was dropped—not unlike Dorothy's Kansas farmhouse—right

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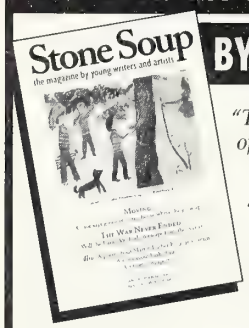
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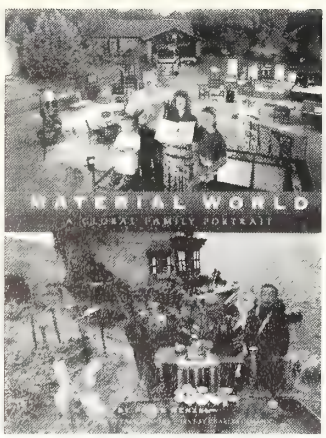
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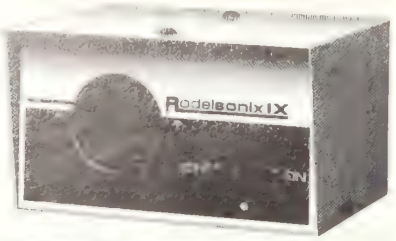
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onto the Greek worship of heroes. The subjects of veneration were replaced, but the custom of honoring the dead persisted, with one difference. The Greeks, who did not believe in an afterlife (the shades in the underworld were just that: dim memories of the lives that preceded them), buried corpses intact and did not disturb their graves, whereas early Christians were soon tearing up knuckles and gristle and hair. The relics trade, which would be condemned by leaders of the Reformation, reached its peak in the Middle Ages, when relics served a number of important functions for the dissemination of Catholicism. For a faith that is founded upon the idea of resurrection of body as well as soul, the literal creation of altar from tomb is an important symbolic act, and Rome required the presence of a martyr's relic for the official consecration of an altar. The Holy Office tried to control the establishment of new churches by dictating what was and was not a martyr's bona fide remains, but, not surprisingly, relics proliferated as quickly as Elvis sightings.

Every sainted excrescence and fluid was discovered and produced. The Virgin's milk was stored in vials all over Christendom—so much of it that Calvin remarked wryly that even if Mary had been a cow she could not have produced such a quantity in a mere lifetime. No one who could afford it was without some fleshly talisman, at the least a thread of someone's shroud or veil. For the common masses, the third-class, or substitute, relic was invented and persists today in such commercial pilgrimage centers as Lourdes. There, a bit of cloth that has supposedly touched a first- or second-class relic of Saint Bernadette is attached to an image of the saint and sold for an affordable price.

The contemplation of relics, Catholic or secular, has not encouraged my faith in resurrection any more than pressing the bag that once held my grandmother's ashes to my lips allows me to believe in her continued life. I am drawn to artifacts of the dead because through

hem I can approach death. Thus I as fascinated by a number of rances Cabrini's garments hanging n the gift shop. Made of white nen or cotton, they were thin nough to appear as underclothes or ightgowns, and bore traces of the ody that once filled them, includng a mesmerizing, ghostly yellow ain in the lap of one. Did the saint ill her tea? Did she once lose conol of some more intimate fluid? Vhatever happened, the stain ofred proof that a life passed through ne fabric's embrace. The same proof ngs the collars of shirts once worn y Elvis, stained their venerated

of thinking about not being. And they comfort us through their mute witness, their not allowing mortality to mean erasure: the dead, they testify, *were*.

Is it because I have had more occasions to consider death than most women my age that I find the remains of the dead, both their bodies and their possessions, so compelling? I was raised by elderly grandparents and by my mother, all of whom died within the same few years. I saved relics of all these people I loved: locks of hair, photographs, jewelry, letters. And, as if that were not

FOR THOSE OF US WHO DO NOT INVEST THEM WITH MIRACULOUS POWER, RELICS OF THE DEAD OFFER MORE PRAGMATIC AND HUMBLE GIFTS: THEY HELP US TOWARD THE CHALLENGING TASK OF THINKING ABOUT NOT BEING

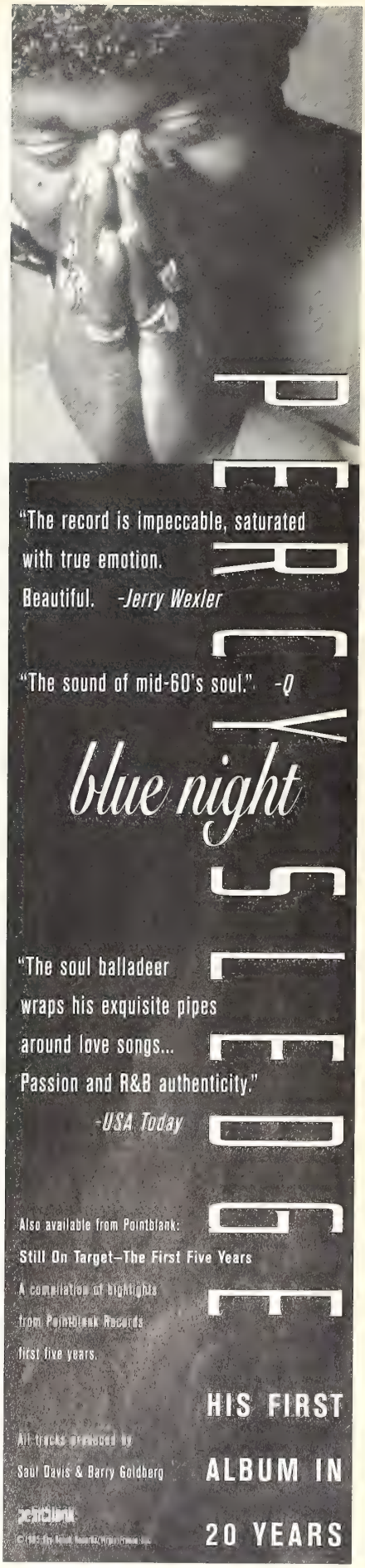
rmpits. Among Elvis's garments to e auctioned were a pristine white rdigan sweater (pressed flat under ne glass of a frame) and a yellow lk shirt, shoulders drooping disonsolately off the hanger, cuffs in srepair, stained at the neck. The rty shirt was valued at $25,000 ore than the clean sweater.

If we do not fancy ourselves as rone to superstition and magic inking as medieval Christians, if e do not generally carry relics on ur bodies in lockets and purses, in ecial rings, bracelets, and chokers, order that they might deliver us om temptation and sin in this life nd from hell in the next, still we ar what we have always feared—ur own deaths. Afraid and therere fascinated by the unthinkable nd of ourselves, we need help in pproaching a notion so alien and mpossible that our society judges its inical evidences obscene, somening to be masked by the emalmer's art. For those of us who do ot invest them with miraculous ower, relics of the dead offer more ragmatic and humble gifts. They elp us toward the challenging task

enough mourning, in the time between and surrounding their deaths I visited other graves and other shrines. In Los Angeles, where I grew up, I saw DiMaggio's rose, replaced daily outside Marilyn Monroe's tomb. In the reliquary at Madrid's Monasterio de la Encarnación, I saw a tiny gold-stoppered bottle of the dried blood of Saint Pantaléon, which is said to be 1,600 years old and is believed to liquefy every twenty-seventh of July, on the saint's feast day.

It is blood that I've looked at with the greatest fascination: stains and smears and crumbs of a substance both humble and mysterious. In the wake of the chemotherapy that destroyed her marrow, my mother received a number of transfusions, and I watched their startling testimony to blood's life and power, saw their blush infuse her white cheeks. The reprieves were brief, only as long as blood lives: two months, no more, for whole blood includes newborn cells that may expect to live for up to 120 days as well as cells that die even as they enter the recipient's bloodstream.

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iconography's eroticized images of stigmata, of martyrdoms, of Christ's opening his robes and his breast to reveal his bleeding heart, I cannot help but associate blood with expiation and with grief. After my grandmother's death, I compulsively donated my own blood every eight weeks, as often as the Red Cross would take it, in what I've only recently understood as my acting out a controlled mourning. At the donor center, a technician whom I too easily confused with an acolyte would relieve me of only so much of my grief: one pint. The act was my assertion that I would contrive to have grief stanched long before I died of it.

At the auction preview, I saved Kurt Cobain's bloodstained guitar for last and stood before it longest, while the white plate under the strings of the smashed Stratocaster shined silver under the portable klieg lights of successive TV crews. One of the guitar's metal strings, perhaps the one on which the dead singer had cut his fingers, was broken; it zigzagged crazily away from the tight rank of its neighbors, making, no doubt, a little silver shiver for the camera's eye to record. As advertised, the white pick guard did bear visible traces of blood. Without that stain, would the guitar have been valued at $15,000? Would someone have paid, as he or she did, $19,550?

Like the martyrs of the early Church, Kurt Cobain is famous for having died. His name was unknown to many, me included, before he killed himself. And though I could not name a single song or lyric by Kurt Cobain, I was moved by the sight of his blood spilled on his guitar. I found it impossible not to read it as a foreshadowing of his taking his own life. Because most of us fear suffering so intensely, we are awed by evidence of it. And in order to help us accept its inevitability, we invest pain with meaning: we revere sufferers and sentimentally imagine that misery is universally (rather than rarely) ennobling, that it sanctifies. For fifty cents you can purchase a prayer by Mother Cabrini inscribed on a laminated card: "The knowledge of suffering is the knowledge of the saints. He who does not know what Christian suffering is, what can he know of greatness and wonder in his days?" Do these words make an exclusively Catholic prayer? Can you not remove the word "Christian" and any limiting definition of the word "saint" and read it as a general human confession?

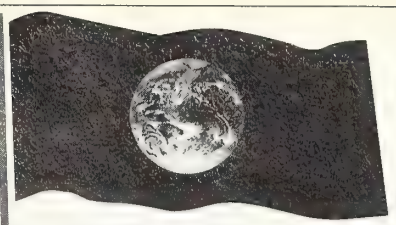
Abraham Lincoln was not a Catholic, but in American terms he is a saint. He has earned that status as much for his statesmanship as for his suffering, which we believe we can see in his very face: lean, ascetic, as long and lugubrious as an El Greco. Man of sorrows, martyr, champion of the persecuted, Lincoln could not be anyone who enjoyed his life as much as well-heeled Jefferson or piggy-jowled Franklin. To be worthy of a reliquary, he would have to have been a man whose log-cabin birth was as humble as an arrival in a manger, whose childhood was doubly blighted by poverty and the death of his mother.

The National Museum of Health and Medicine, run by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and located on the grounds of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., began its collecting activities during the Civil War. It greets visitors with a large, artfully lit glass case containing souvenirs of the autopsy performed on President Lincoln, as well as some from the autopsy of his assassin, John Wilkes Booth, including two bloodstained shirt cuffs once worn by army assistant surgeon Edward Curtis. In 1865, Curtis participated in Lincoln's autopsy, during which his shirt was splashed with the dead president's blood. There is an illicit quality to the relic, in part conferred by brown stains on yellowed cotton, which remind even the most reverent viewer of dirty underwear. But this humble aspect is part of what moves us, because we half expect that the blood of Lincoln would be different from our own, would have a luminosity, a molecular shiver. Because it is brown and dull and faded—utterly unremarkable—it witnesses to the grace of God or of fate, to whatever force

can lift a poor boy from obscurity and make him our president.

I consider myself less a patriot than a Catholic, but the blood of Abraham Lincoln, along with the gray curls shorn from around his wound, brought unexpected tears to my eyes. Why? In part because I consider locks of hair as baby's mementos, all of which have an inherent melancholy: the reminder that time passes, that all babies age and die. But Lincoln's hair was forced right up against evil and violence, and it is the knowledge of what was bought with those curls that strikes us so viscerally. In Lisieux, France, there is a shrine to Saint Therese that includes her hair in a resplendent gold frame. The luxury of those long lustrous curls, shorn when she entered the Carmelite order at fifteen and saved by her father, together with an understanding of what austerity and suffering they bought, cannot fail to move visitors. Just as pilgrims to Lisieux are likely to believe that Therese's renunciation of the earthly pleasures symbolized by her frankly sexual tresses paid her way through gates of unimaginable splendor, so does the pilgrim to the Lincoln shrine accept his grizzled curls, lost in the wake of an assassin's bullet, as part of the price of admission to a different pantheon. Perhaps this is why Indiana University's Lilly Library bought Sylvia Plath's childhood curls in 1978, fifteen years after her suicide; their arrested innocence is made all the more powerful by what would follow in the poet's life—and vice versa.

The Lincoln exhibit includes one of several probes used to locate the bullet in Lincoln's brain, skull fragments removed from the wound, and the bullet itself, all of which keep close company with sections of spinal cord and vertebrae from John Wilkes Booth. I find the choice to enshrine the assassin's relics with those of the martyr surprising, and even a casual visitor is disturbed by this conjugal juxtaposition of sacred and profane. I watched several people pass by the lit case. "I don't like that," said one old woman in a wheelchair, pushed by her grandson. "Don't like what?" he asked.



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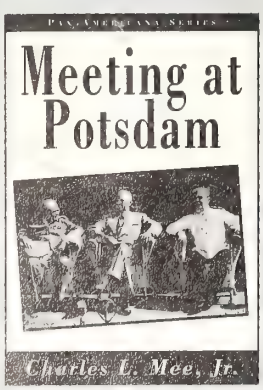
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"Sticking his things in with the others," she said, pointing at Booth's vertebrae.

Had the nuns who arranged Mother Cabrini's relics been given curatorial privilege over the Lincoln artifacts, they would have created a more agreeable display. Their sophistication, probably intuitive—nothing that could have been stipulated in a manual—was such that they divided the woman into her divine and earthly tendencies. Her belt of nails and the knotted scourge are in a separate cabinet from her silver hairbrush and buttonhook. All are sensual artifacts, but tools for grooming the soul are different from those intended for the pleasure of the body.

Gowns and hats and hairbrushes. Shavers, guitars, washbasins. Things that once belonged to people we did not ever touch or speak with, people whose fame allows them the immortality of their stories but cannot halt the decay of their bodies or the inevitable denouements of their private, real lives. If Abraham Lincoln, Elvis, Babe Ruth, and all the saints are not endowed with powers enabling them to escape death, then who is? In the *Iliad*, Homer tells us that Achilles was given the choice of a short heroic life or a long unremarkable one. He chose to die a hero. Later, when Odysseus encounters him in the *Odyssey*, Achilles' shade bitterly laments such folly. Poetic license allows the dead Achilles to know what he could not and we cannot yet fully understand: life ends.

My grandfather, who raised me as his daughter, was the first member of my immediate family to die. I was twenty-three. He took long enough to die that, as I anticipated my loss, I had time to break down my fear into its parts. I was afraid of the pain I would feel at losing the companionship [illegible] who [illegible] to me [illegible]. But I was also afraid of death—not my grandfather's particular death, but the unapproachable and unavoidable fact of human mortality. What if my grandfather should die in my presence? I worried that I might have to witness his turning from living to dead flesh. I had never before seen a corpse.

A cool, previously hidden pragmatism led me to prepare myself. I looked up funeral notices in the *Los Angeles Times*, picked out the nearest mortuary that advertised a "viewing" of a man of advanced years, and went to look at the embalmed corpse of someone I didn't know. I had the good fortune of an uninterrupted visit—there were no legitimate mourners to see as I leaned into the casket and brushed the corpse's cheek, touched its immobile, cool lips. How straightforward death was! I nearly laughed in relief. A month later, when I kissed my grandfather goodbye, I hugged his body in unabashed affection. Here was what had supported, given form and substance, to the person I had loved all my life. I brought scissors to the hospital morgue and cut a curl, which I still have, as well as his glasses and a pair of his wooden shoe trees.

Among what I have of my dead mother are two of her baby teeth, saved by my grandmother in a tiny glass-stoppered vial of rubbing alcohol. The teeth, in the sentimental vernacular of baby mementos, recall pearls, but in each a brown root cavity bears traces of her blood. They are a double relic because, beyond my mother, they attest to her own mother's love, which counted them of value, saved and bottled them. And they exist within generations of my family's baby teeth, generations that include my own and my daughter's. Holding the little bottle, I cannot not consider my little girl and boy, and what, after I am dead, they might keep of me and hold in their hands.

In the last months of my grandmother's life, she kept a mohair scarf wrapped around her waist, hidden under the blankets of her bed. She was not cold but afraid. Without this security object she could not rest, and she allowed no one to take it from her, not even long enough to launder it. In the end, it was bloodstained from a wound I caused while bathing her one morning. She had sat hunched over for so long that the fold of skin at her waist grew together, and when I washed it I tore the

dhesion open; it began to bleed and ever healed. After my grandmother ied, I never considered washing the carf any more than whoever bought lvis's dirty shirt did, or the curator ho guards the stained cuffs of Lin-oln's autopsy surgeon. Clean, it ould tell me nothing.

When I hold the scarf I hold both y grandmother's and my own death my hands. The scarf and I inform ach other. Only I can tell the story bears; only such an object can tell e what my helpless trips to the nor center belied: one day blood, nd grief, will flow unchecked. ■

ecember Index Sources

2,3 U.S. Department of Labor (Wash-gton); **4** Challenger, Gray & Christ-as, Inc. (Chicago); **5,6** *Harper's* re-arch; **7** *Harper's* research; **8** American olitical Network (Alexandria, Va.); **10** Lauriat's Bookstore (Boston); **11** rst Lady's Press Office (Washington); **2** the *Washington Post* (Washington); **3** *Forbes* (N.Y.C.); **14** ArtRock Gallery San Francisco); **15,16** United States ntencing Commission (Washington); **7** Stanard & Associates, Inc. (Chica-o); **18,19** Defender Association of hiladelphia (Philadelphia); **20** Los An-les Police Department (Los Angeles); **1** Harvard Law School (Cambridge, ass.); **22** National Science Foundation Arlington, Va.)/Cornell University thaca, N.Y.); **23** Newark Public hool System (Newark, N.J.); **24** Bu-au of Labor Statistics (Washington); **5** Associated Press (Paris); **26** Stock-olm County Council (Stockholm); **27** exas Transportation Institute (College ation, Tex.); **28** World Resources In-itute (Washington); **29,30** World atch Institute (Washington); **31** itish Antarctic Survey (Cambridge, ngland); **32** University of Calgary Calgary, Alberta, Canada); **33** SFS-FX ristmas Displays (Arcadia, Calif.); **34** labama Department of Corrections lontgomery, Ala.); **35** Oklahoma De-rtment of Corrections (Oklahoma ty, Okla.) **36** AT&T (Warren, N.J.); Louis Harris and Associates .Y.C.); **38** David Margolick, the *New rk Times* (San Francisco); **39,40** Cali-nia Department of Motor Vehicles acramento, Calif.).

Correction: Source No. 20 in the ovember Index Sources should have ad, "Dan La Botz, *Democracy in exico.*"



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NOTES FOR "SECRET WEAPON"
The coding device is INVISIBLE INK.
Note: anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: 1. painkiller, pun; 5. Helsinki, hidden; 9. Alf-Alf-a; 10. ink(l)ing; 11 two mngs.; 12. think (turned) over, pun; 14. hidden; 16. s(kin)-tin-K.O.; 17. kin-kin-ess; 19. skin-(truc)k-s; 20. R(U.S.S.)ia(rev.); 22. b(E)t; 23. ra(tfi*)nk; 26. inter-link; 27. blink-E.R.; 28. lu(nch)-cent; 31. luxe, homophone; 32. freethinker, pun; 35. a-mi; 36. air, hidden; 37. S(l.-in)ky; 38. Brinks-man's-hip; 39. kitchen sink, homophone; 40. trinket*. DOWN: 1.pe(ruse)r; 2. Ill.; 3. *; 4. *; 5. two mngs.; 6. E(lo)ise*; 7. L-Ives; 8. two mngs.; 9. (h)aunts; 13. (t)rust; 15. c.(ort)-ex; 18. S.(a)N.E.; 21. *; 22. B.(eth*)S.; 24. alum-in(rev.); 25. Burr, two mngs.; 26. *; 27. b.-lank; 29. belie(f); 30. cry-pt; 33. *; 34. (LA)-test; 36. hidden.

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The Hapsburg model of the new world order

By Nicholas Fraser

"I dreamed that I had died for my country, and right away a coffin-lid opener was there, holding out his hand for a tip."
—Karl Kraus

In Vienna early last summer, sitting in the Café Griensteidl, surrounded by quiet opera-loving couples in expensive English tweeds, I looked at the gate through which Emperor Franz Josef was driven by horse-drawn carriage, even after the automobile was invented, and idly wondered whether I should go to the Museum of the Austrian Undertaker to see the special exhibit of mortuary ceremonial through the ages. I had come to Vienna looking for signs of resurgent Nazism, primed for a siege of journalistic outrage, but two days spent scrutinizing the evasions of right-wing politicians made the emotion seem superfluous, and at a café table behind the old imperial palace, looking at the exquisitely modern Looshaus, which the aging emperor hated so much that he caused the palace shutters to be kept permanently closed, it occurred to me that although history is said to be everywhere in Europe these days, it has mysteriously lost its value. Why take an excessive interest in the fate of the Weimar Republic when you might have bought Hermann Göring's yacht in 1945 and watched its cash value multiply at a rate higher than that of a Van Gogh sunflower? Why go to the Museum of the Austrian Undertaker when Vienna itself is the cemetery of the twentieth century?



So much of what was beautiful, horrible, or merely silly in our times originated here, and yet most of it was thrown away: Esperanto, pan-Germanism, Zionism, dental technology, consensual sadomasochism, symbolic logic, political anti-Semitism, atonal music, gutter journalism, Freudian and Reichian psychoanalysis, subsidized public housing, affirmative action, ethnic cleansing, lederhosen, plastic antler buttons, and fiberglass ski equipment. Vienna showed me not that the past could be brought back, or made use of, but that it could pile up gratuitously, horror upon horror, and lose its significance. The only lessons available in Vienna were those conventionally associated with death or whipped cream.

But the Austrian past seemed ready for a *fin de siècle* imaginative re-annexation, in particular the endlessly replicated serial void implied by such local products as Baroque and the waltz. Heartlessness and insouciance were thought to be characteristic of the Viennese, two qualities noted with disapproval by sober-minded Anglo-Saxon commentators; now they are thought to be characteristic of those in Bombay or Beverly Hills. Looking at such relics of Empire as the sculpted eagles still to be found over favored shops selling hair tonic or riding equipment, or the beautiful dark green and ochre in which Hapsburg palaces, churches, and police stations were decorated, I felt that many of our own makeshift arrangements might just as easily slide away. No one by 1913 knew why the Empire was sinking or particularly cared about the fate of civilization; no one cares much now. The Viennese press offered up its dai-

Nicholas Fraser lives in London. He is writing a book about fin de siècle *Europe.*

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[illegible] with a chilly and gruesome precision worthy of Rupert Murdoch; then, as now, conspicuous works of genius were considered irrelevant next to such absorbing occurrences as the last words of a handsome serial killer, the testimony of a surviving member of a family of street vendors who jumped in unison from a window ledge, or the diminishing wheat content of the Standard Imperial Army Loaf.

Diving each day through the intact wreckage of this European Atlantis, I felt able to reclaim the Hapsburg disaster for the present. The pompous buildings erected on the chestnut-tree-shaded Ring in a variety of Ruritanian styles—Parliament was rendered in French neoclassical bombast; City Hall in contrasting Gothic, copied from Britain—were meant to celebrate the triumph of a new Monarchy of Law, but they seemed contemporary in their overanxious sense of ornament, like the corporate headquarters of insolvent banks. Passing from Catholic autocracy to mass democracy in the twenty-odd years around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Empire buckled and cracked in what a later generation of sociologists, examining the Shah of Iran's oil-based empire of kitsch, would call "a crisis of modernization." Instead of maturing into liberal constitutionalism, Austria-Hungary fell prey to fundamentalist, nationalist demagogy. Most of the fifteen-odd national groups—among them Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Ruthenes, Slovenes, and, by 1908, Bosnians and Croats—hated one another, but all of them feared and resented what the Viennese economist Joseph Schumpeter later called the "creative destruction" of liberal capitalism. In particular, they came to hate those whom they held responsible for their impoverishment and deracination and who were the only real "people of the Empire" unconditionally loyal to the Crown: cosmopolitan, urban, liberal Jews.

On a small scale, with due nineteenth-century pedantry and insanely fulsome constitutional legalisms—endless dull tomes were written on the subject of the "Austrian idea," and the creation of hemicycle-shaped banquettes, like irony or café cha became a growth industry—the E pire was supposed to become t equivalent, with a Hapsburg at head, of the European Union multinational state neutrally adm istered by kindly bureaucrats. Afte less than productive morning spe observing the gentian-blue eyes o right-wing politician and listening platitudes about the Austrian futu I walked through marbled corrid until I stood in the old chamber which representatives were suppos to come from the farthest provinc of the Empire, and once again I exp rienced the shock of recognition might have been inspecting a lo prototype of the United Nations S curity Council on Turtle Bay. Th dome of the Parliament chamber w patterned with luscious art dec flowers, in the style of a Par brasserie. Above one line of bench stood togaed Romans, off the rack, machine-cut marble; from above th other glared the bewhiskered visag of the Emperor, in his habitual fanc military dress, flanked by bust sphinxes. In this room the nob ideal of Austrian democracy rapid withered and died, and with it th conviction that the European futur belonged to a new world order of r tional and progressive liberalism Deputies banged their desktops an threw inkpots at one another ove the issue of Czech or Slovene linguis tic rights (Adolf Hitler was shocke in 1907 by the snoring and the rowd behavior, and it became the pretex for his wishing to abolish representa tive democracy) or abused their par liamentary privilege by offerin bounties to anyone prepared to kil rich Jewish businessmen. Acting i the name of free speech, or simpl convenience, art-loving liberal bu reaucrats governed instead by decree appealing to the diminishing authori ty of the kindly imperial figure o Reaganesque imperturbability whos likeness was affixed to the wall above their desks.

Little Austria has been formally neutral since 1945. The old Hapsburg parade grounds were plowed up long ago to create suburban, Alpine-style

weekend retreats with small, gnome-filled gardens. But walking through the Moorish arches of the Museum of Military History one idle morning, I found an array of military uniforms in the old barracks. They seemed made for corseted munchkins in children's-party bumble bee or Magic Marker colors, and the hats were covered with forgotten inscriptions, studded with odd pistachio-colored plumes, or garnished with the feathers of obscure Alpine fowl. No one in *fin de siècle* Austria took the army seriously or was in the least surprised when it was soundly defeated, but it nonetheless comes as a shock to see the imperial heir apparent Franz Ferdinand's bloodstained uniform under glass, and the bathtub-shaped car (manufactured in Vienna, the ultimate non-getaway appliance) in which he was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist on June 28, 1914.

As early as 1895 the anti-Semitic Karl Lueger became the first European politician to adopt a platform of ethnic discrimination when he recommended, to the applause of his German and Catholic supporters, that city jobs should henceforth be allocated not according to talent but according to racial origins. Dismayed, the Emperor refused to acknowledge Lueger's government, but he was forced to give in to democratic pressures. It became impossible for civilized people, particularly if they were Jewish, to participate in political culture. Instead, they interested themselves in the marvelously available circumstances of *douceur*: making money, performing or sponsoring art, and—like the Herzls or the Wittgensteins—encouraging their children to become geniuses. In France, individuals broke noisily and self-consciously with their bourgeois pasts; in Austria, an entire class stood wholly outside the murderous frivolity of politics. Amid the stuffiness and hypocrisy of the dying Empire, there was a large and dangerous edge of creativity characterized by an ironic sense of defeat or impending disaster. Everybody knew that the gates to the enchanted garden would be shut long before the Austrian elite declared war on Serbia, destroying themselves and the rest of Europe in the most terrible way imaginable.

The Austrians, as everyone knows, have a problem with their past—their Nazi past above all—but after spending a full week at the edge of the Vienna woods I was beginning to feel that the questions posed by their history were larger ones, encapsulating the European collapse and, beyond that, perhaps the limits of memory itself. The dusk was bluish and full of the clanking noises of trams when I stood outside the Opera House on the night the Vienna bourgeoisie attended a sold-out concert dedicated to the memory of the Jewish musicians and singers who were purged in 1938 and later murdered. People *grüssgotted* in polite whispers and kissed one another on the cheeks with laborious precision. Most of them were embarrassed, as people are when they attend the funeral of someone they never really knew, and I felt nervously party—again, the same lingering fear—to the pervasive air of bad faith. It was as if Margaret Thatcher, acting against her better judgment, had chosen to attend a commemorative function celebrating the heroic lives of martyred animal-rights activists or Irish republicans.

The Empire ended in November 1918 with the creation of a diminished, ethnically cleansed republic of "German Austria," now severed from its subject lands. Everywhere tradesmen pulled down the imperial eagles from storefronts while generals removed the cockades from their hats. "The Vienna coffeehouses are fuller than ever before," noted the journalist and wit Alfred Polgar, who later emigrated to Brooklyn. "They were always the center of Viennese life. But now they are the center of the Viennese death agony. In times like these, the perspiration of one's fellow men is a nerve-strengthening fluid, and when two or more tremble together, they give off a calming sound."

Most Viennese writers came from rich families that lost everything; a new edge of desperation came into their work. "The real end of the world," Karl Kraus wrote in 1922, "is the destruction of the spirit; after that there remains only the insignifi-



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cant attempt to see whether after such a destruction the world can go on." Kraus, whose work is said to be nearly impossible to translate and who is almost forgotten outside Germany, was a journalist of a kind that I'm afraid we no longer have. Author and publisher, for almost forty years, of *Die Fackel* (*The Beacon*), which he described as an "anti-paper," Kraus freely exercised the journalistic prerogative of malice, but he did so with comprehensive, unforgiving intelligence. Like most Jewish intellectuals of his generation, Kraus experienced a periodic sense of love, tempered by exasperation, for his half-finished, moribund homeland, but he had seen through the wretched, pasteboard popular cult of the Hapsburg monarchy. He now feared the impending Germanization of Central Europe, but, like most Viennese in the ruins of the interwar period, he very clearly sensed his café-bound impotence.

Kraus's keen sensitivity to the nuance of lies and self-delusion caused him to become, in Elias Canetti's words, "a kind of scourge of God for guilt-ridden Mankind." By 1923, his oratorical performances in the Musikverein concert hall began to draw capacity crowds of over a thousand. Kraus's most successful recital, "The Guided Tour to Hell," took as its point of departure an advertisement he had found in the *Basel News* offering a tour of the French-German battlefields, with a privileged view of the Thiaumont Ossuary, where the recently dead were being reburied, and a luncheon ("with wine and coffee, gratuities included") at the best hotel in Verdun. Kraus's exquisite and irascible sensibility was sustained in extremis by the cultural junk of *faits divers;* he wrote an eight-hour play about the Great War entitled *The Last Days of Mankind,* which was composed of moronic newspaper items and the by now bizarrely anachronistic communiqués of the Imperial General Staff. Today, it would be a morally uplifting PBS television series, a melancholy contemplation of Tragic Waste narrated by David McCullough and set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Kraus was the first journalist to see that it

as pointless to talk nobly about erving truth when the machine of public opinion"—a set of collusive rrangements between press mag- ates and advertisers, abetted by an ndifferent state for whose represen- atives public morality had ceased to e important—existed to service the ppetite for spectacle. Standing out- de politics, he blamed the catastro- he of Austria on the fecklessness nd ignorance of its educated class, mong whom he included his fellow ournalists and, more reluctantly, imself. "I have nothing to say about litler," he wrote sadly just before his eath in 1936, two years before the *Anschluss* destroyed Austria for a second time.

Half-abandoned, a meteorite llen from space, Vienna was enor- ous and full of green, threatening its emptiness. On the U-Bahn one unday afternoon, watching old peo- le with string bags full of provi- ons, I wondered where all that ocalypse had gone. Two days later, an apartment on Linke Wienzeile, nce a grand avenue built to provide ie Emperor with a fitting approach o the Imperial City, I watched zech workers scrape away cream nd purple layers of paint, exposing omed plasterwork in a series of agniloquently vulgar parquet- oored salons, to which a separate arbled porte cochere gave hand- me access via an Ernst Lubitsch ollywood-style wrought-iron stair- ay. The first owner had been a Jew- h textile magnate from Brno who ent bust in the 1920s crash. Later ie rooms were turned into a dance chool where one could learn altzes, tangos, and polkas. I fin- ered a set of ballroom tickets found ehind the wainscoting; they came rapped in a National Socialist flyer.

The Man Without Qualities, Robert lusil's vast, uncompleted novel, was ritten in the interwar period, but it set in 1913, in the imaginary em- ire of Kakania, "that state since anished that no-one understood." he novel features a Parallel Cam- aign, consisting of a group of aristo- atic, middle-class, and intellectual orthies, soldiers, visiting German apitalists, and society hostesses who have been given the task of devising a celebration of the Emperor's seventieth jubilee in 1918. A scientist turned philosopher, Musil prematurely understood the baroque epistemological fantasies inherent in the notion of "virtual reality." Trapped in the Kakanian equivalent of cyberspace, his characters are pilgrims in a country without progress. Is the future Nietzschean, managerial-technocratic, or New Age utopian-mystical? Are the nihilistic passions of intransigent minorities to be deplored or, with clumsy magnanimity, given accommodation, even when it is clear that they will destroy the shape of the world? These discussions are doomed to inconsequence; we know that the Emperor died before his jubilee could be celebrated.

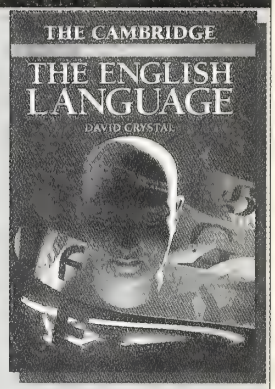
The daffiness of *The Man Without Qualities* is what renders an otherwise prodigiously self-conscious work of High Culture wholly addictive. "She had only one fault," we're told about a woman character, who from listening to the diagnosis of sex therapists has come to think of herself as a nymphomaniac: "She could become inordinately aroused at the mere sight of a man." The zeitgeist washes pitilessly over everyone, sparing neither moral scruple nor nicety of expression. In Kakania, piles of bedside reading materialize and disappear—they are sampled and put to one side, like the food at Louis XIV's Versailles or late-night TV shows—and ill-appropriated wisdom is conveyed to the masses in foreshortened, mutilated form, just as the camisoles of Diotima, the beautiful and overweight muse of the Parallel Campaign, are snipped and handed on to her diminutive Jewish maid, Rachel.

Death has stalked the century everywhere in Europe, and yet only Austria looks and feels wholly moribund. Going one afternoon through patches of sunlight and tunnels under the cracked side walls behind the facades of old tenements, I took the U-Bahn away from the Danube to the Hütteldorf terminus, on the edge of the Vienna woods. There I sat in a small house full of bright paintings and listened to Elfriede Jelinek, who writes clever, minor-key, end-of-the-

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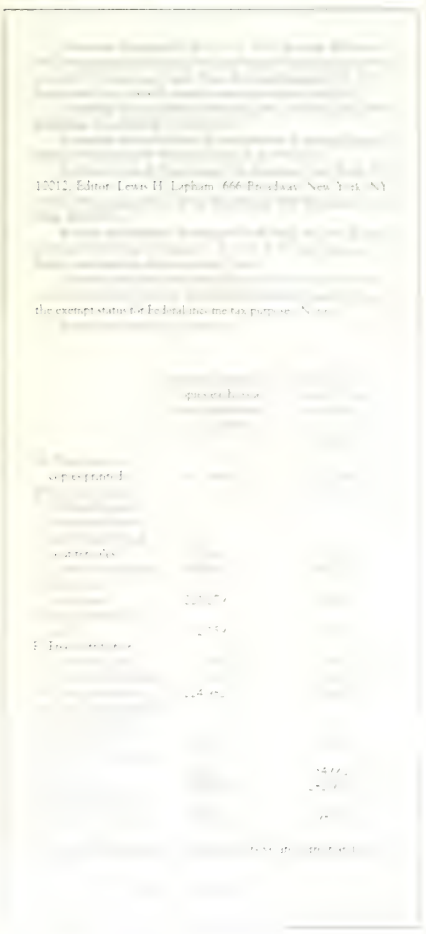
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world novels whose characters are sociopathic students, victim piano teachers, or dumb and murderous *Glühwein*-cheeked ski instructors. Tall and blonde, dressed in punkish clothes, Jelinek has gone out of her way to annoy genteel Austria, posing tied to a bed for a German magazine. I wanted to know how it was possible for individuals to write, or even live, in such circumstances. What did the death of a culture feel like?

"Ghosts are our only means of survival—it's all a matter of what we do with our ghosts," she said. "As a people we have a negative identity, based on no longer really being what we were, or on the lies we continually tell about ourselves. Our greatest lie is that of High Culture. The real Austria had a predominantly Jewish culture, and it was popular, a mixture of schmaltz and intelligence; we killed it. The High Culture lie—music, of course, but you get the countryside thrown in, too—has become very profitable to us. It's the way we keep the tourists coming in. But it's why we look to the world like a glossy corpse."

I said that I was perplexed by the fitful or self-contradictory acts of remembrance toward the Nazi past. For instance, you could visit an exhibition of anti-Semitic artifacts at the Rathaus museum—"hanging Jew" watch fobs and yarmulkaed moneylenders executed in Meissen porcelain—and yet swastikas were painstakingly removed from imported kits of American model aircraft. The Austrian prosecution of neo-Nazis amounted to petty harassment; one could be jailed for sporting the swastika. Meanwhile, most gestures of reparation came too late and consisted of too little. Why had the Austrian Parliament finally, in 1995, offered only $52 million to the survivors of Kristallnacht? Why had politicians to acknowledge that the country was a participant in the war

"More lies, more delusions, more shit," Jelinek said briskly. "The neo-Nazis aren't in the least important.

they represent the hidden reality of Austria—and that is what all of us fear. After all, we supplied the Verfuhrerfiguren—the lederhosenized tion—of National Socialism. We were all of us Nazis, really. The homoerotic side of Nazism comes from Austria, and the association with the Catholic Church. So we repress what we think we still might love—self-repression is a national industry. Our fear is of what we are—deep kitsch, deep Nazism, deepest Austria."

You can get around Austria quickly, and on a rainy Saturday morning I drove clockwise from Vienna, first east and southwards to the Hungarian border, and then to the west, into the old German provinces of the Empire. Between long, dark tunnels and distant, snowy Alps, I saw von Trapp–like meadows and, as I passed roadside *Gasthäuser* or small houses, brazen pink or red flowers lodged picturesquely on dark-wood window ledges from which leaned twinkly-eyed, leathery peasants dressed in dark blue and wearing caps or checked kerchiefs. At the German frontier, I stopped in the gabled *platz* of Braunau on the Inn and walked the few hundred yards to Hitler's birthplace, a three-story, comfortable bourgeois building, exactly the sort of homely, dignified place where one might expect to find the family of a minor imperial official. The Hitler apartment has tactfully been turned into a children's library, and I could glimpse the side of Big Bird's head through the window amid stacks of neatly piled books and primary-colored building blocks. In the street stood a lump of stone to mark the site, piously dedicated to the victims of fascism, scrubbed free of furtive graffiti and the stains of hastily dropped bouquets.

I drove back to the Danube, following the route taken by Hitler's troops when he returned in 1938, driving through village after village, each of them spotless, hung with red-and-white flags, eerily empty in the sunlight. Finally I parked the car by the river in Linz, where Hitler attended the Realschule from 1900 to 1902 (his grades were poor, and he lied about them), learning about disgruntled German nationalism

from a militant schoolmaster. The Führer loved Linz as an ideal great German place as much as he detested cosmopolitan Jew–dominated Vienna, and in his bunker he kept a scale model of the city, showing astonished visitors the renovations he had in mind when the war was finished. From time to time a debate arises over whether some sort of public acknowledgment of Hitler's Austrianness should be made, but the answer, sustained by the expressed fear that such a site might become a cult object or a sacred place of pilgrimage, is always no. I walked around the city, which was green and leafy, boring in a distinctively German way. On the *platz*, teenagers took part in a skateboarding contest sponsored by the makers of ski lifts, and as I ate a Linzertorte—chocolate-free, unlike its superior Vienna counterparts, brown, full of jam and marzipan—I tried to imagine how the members of Musil's Parallel Campaign, given the assignment, would have tackled the problem of commemorating Hitler. Well, they would have talked to the usual charlatan anthropologists, performance artists, and corporate astrologists, and I imagine—times were more liberal then—they dutifully would have consulted a few of the more respectable skinheads, trucked in from sewing ski clothing in their progressive prisons. But I felt certain that Diotima and her worthies would fastidiously have come to no readily formulated conclusions.

We want memory in Europe, but not its evil or painful consequences. Knowing and not knowing, which is the Austrian style of correctness, has become our ideal state, reflected in the absurd but pervasive concept of "heritage," affixed to any site tasteful enough to accommodate paying visitors. "In Western Europe you have cathedrals," a Polish friend once said to me lugubriously. "Here we only have concentration camps." But, as he would be the first to acknowledge, the *Shoah* business is now thriving, and battlefield tours of Sarajevo and its environs, gratuities included, are sure to be advertised when the killing is over. You can catch oblivion fever as well as cold shaking hands with Pluto amid the rain-lashed Marne valley battlefields of 1914; a disco bunker in Berlin is in the works and, on the territory of the old, unlamented German Democratic Republic, an instructional park dedicated to the horrors of Communism, complete with dogs, barbed wire, and police files.

Walking by the Danube, where Hitler wanted to erect an opera house seating 35,000, an art gallery, and a 300-foot bell tower dedicated to German culture, I came across lighted stores and enormous tents. Outside, children bought and hugged huge fair-haired dolls, or were twirled upside down screaming in machines from Stuttgart; inside, while I ate bauernwurst and frankfurters, Ferdy and his Outlaws, an all-male oompah band wearing lederhosen, high heels, D-cup bras, and blond wigs plaited with red braid, sang very loud songs in which the words *Prosit* and *Gemutlichkeit* occurred with great regularity. With each chorus, people banged their mugs on the table, swaying happily. A stout waitress came by and asked if I wanted a torte. I looked at the quaking chocolate alps and the streaming glacier cakes. No, I said, perhaps later; and I walked out into the night, which was still full of noise and light, heavy with the smell of burning meat.

Standing by the glass-black Danube, I finally located the source of the fear that had pursued me in Austria. It came not from the biblical realization that everything ultimately would be forgotten but from the acknowledgment that death, in particular the death of those with whom one shares nothing, doesn't matter. I recalled that Karl Kraus had described Austria as "the experimental ground of European destruction," and in this, as in so many other things, he surely was correct. But now I was certain that the real Austrian mistake—it's a common one, easily made—was to have insisted so unequivocally, so very tactlessly and unhypocritically, on the right to forget. I'll think of tortes and the Danube as each tedious bar of the coming *fin de siècle* waltz jogs us closer to oblivion. ■

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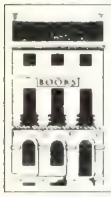
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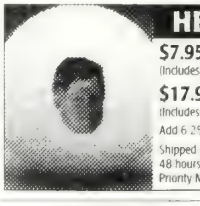


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NPG Statement on Population

We Believe that the Optimum Rate of Population Growth is Negative

We believe that the optimum **rate** of population growth for the United States (and for the world) is **negative** until such time as the **scale** of economic activity, and its environmental effects, is reduced to a level that would be sustainable indefinitely.

We are convinced that if present rates of population and economic growth are allowed to continue, the end result, within the lifetimes of many of us, would inevitably be near universal poverty in a hopelessly polluted nation and world.

We agree with Professor Herman Daly who has pointed out that the human economy is a subset of the biosphere, and that **the current scale of economic activity relative to the biosphere is already far too large to be sustainable indefinitely**.

Stabilization Is Not Enough

We believe that calls for merely slowing down rapid population growth, or for stabilizing population at present or even higher levels, **are totally inadequate**.

Such proposals, while presented as a solution, **fail to address the central issue**: how to create a national (and world) economy that will be sustainable indefinitely.

At present or at even higher levels of population, neither the application of science and technology, nor simplifying life-styles, nor any combination of the two, can offer any hope of reducing our impact on the environment to a sustainable level.

We Need a Smaller Population

We recognize that our impact on the environment in terms of pollution and resource depletion is the product of our numbers times our per capita consumption of energy and materials. Thus, there are only three ways by which that impact can be reduced:

- By reducing the size of our population by a negative rate of population growth.
- By reducing over consumption (in the United States and other developed countries) by simplifying life-styles.
- By reducing resource depletion and pollution per unit of consumption through more efficient use of energy and materials.

Population size is by far the most critical of those three variables. **Nevertheless, our present scale of economic activity is so large relative to the biosphere that all three measures are needed in order to reduce it to a sustainable level.**

An Urgent Need

Over 20 years ago, when our U.S. population was far smaller, (about 202 million, rather than our present 264 million), Professor John Holdren correctly saw the urgent need for a negative rate of population growth. At that time he wrote,

"...What is surprising...is that there is not more agreement concerning what the rate of change of population size should be. For given the uncertain, but possibly grave, risks associated with substantially increasing our impact on the environment, and given that population growth aggravates or impedes the solution of a wide variety of other problems...it should be obvious that the optimum **rate** of population growth is zero or negative until such time as the uncertainties have been removed and the problems solved."

A Population Goal for Our Country

We must have, first of all, a nationally determined population goal for our country, accompanied by effective policies to achieve it.

We urge Congress and President Clinton to set, as a top priority national goal, **the achievement of a negative rate of population growth for the United States until such time as the scale of our economic activity is reduced to a sustainable level**.

We also call on our political leaders to urge other nations to pursue a similar goal.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE.**

NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization founded in 1972. **We are the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and recommends specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

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LETTERS

Continued from page 3

lale's description of it, that Ther-
ıux's *The Happy Isles of Oceania* is a
nultilayered investigation of,
mong other things, the sweep of
Polynesian culture across the Pacif-
c, the despoliation of natural
ceanic wonders at the hands of nu-
lear-bomb tests and drift-net fish-
ng, and the disruption of native
ives by crusading Mormons and
ther proselytizers. Theroux's sym-
athy is with the underdog, and if
ıe finds himself "muttering against
nissionaries and generally rooting
or heathens," who can blame him
esides Tisdale? As for her belief
hat Theroux has no sense of hu-
nor, any writer who can describe a
Tibetan yak as looking like "a cow
n its way to the opera" (from *Riding
he Iron Rooster*) qualifies as an en-
aging wit in my book.

Tisdale's dismissal of Raban belies
dismaying inability to follow what's
n the page. She seems unable to
rasp even *the central point* in *Hunting
Mister Heartbreak*: being a new arrival
o the United States amounts to cre-
ting a new persona for yourself, or
aving one foisted on you. Tisdale's
nability to see the connection be-
ween this idea and the lack of
ames and origins for the book's
characters" suggests an attention-
eficit disorder.

Give me Theroux and Raban any
ay. Tisdale you can keep.

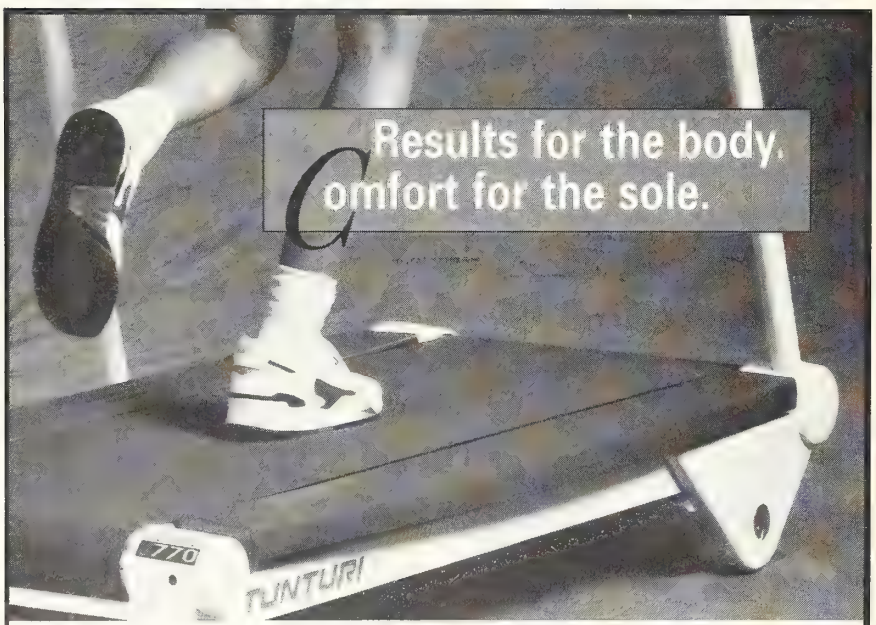
Michael Upchurch
Seattle

It seems that Sallie Tisdale's main
omplaint about today's travel writ-
rs is their "smallness of spirit." One
an almost imagine Jan Morris ex-
laining wearily to her, "I am big.
t's the world that got small."

Which is true, and partly respon-
ible for the change that Tisdale re-
rets. In this age, when it sometimes
eems that everyone has been every-
here, travel writers have faced a
hallenge far greater than that of
heir predecessors: they must not
imply show us a place but do so in a
ay that makes us see it anew. That
he genre not only has survived
mocking Paul Fussell's premature
ulogy for it) but has flourished
speaks eloquently for the talents of today's practitioners.

If these writers have attitude, as Tisdale complains they do, it is because this is part of our modern sensibility. Travel writing, like any art, reflects its time, and the times, in this field at least, are not nearly as bad and were never quite as good as Tisdale likes to think. Paul Theroux, whom she describes as "sour," is an obvious disciple of Evelyn Waugh, the leading light in the "Wogs begin at Calais" school of travel writing. Robert Byron, whom she admires, was a master at inventing dialogue, a sin she so sanctimoniously pins on Jonathan Raban. And I find it almost sad that she fails, perhaps conveniently, to mention three very active and insightful travel writers—Norman Lewis, Colin Thubron, and Pico Iyer—whose books, like her old favorites, "are flavored with generosity and a good heart."

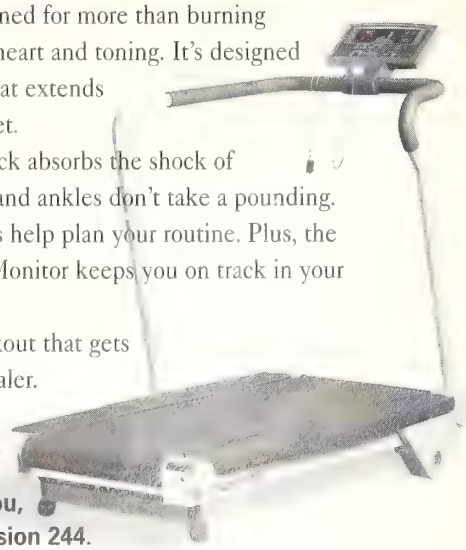
Thomas Swick
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



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Peace in the Middle East

Can it be achieved by yielding land and authority to the PLO?

It's more than two years since the handshake between Yassir Arafat, and Yitzhak Rabin. Since then, Israel has made crucial concessions to the PLO in the quest for peace, most importantly, yielding vital strategic territory to it. The PLO has not corresponded. Murderous attacks on Israelis have increased to unprecedented levels. Equally significant, the PLO has until now not complied with its promise to abolish the clause in its "covenant" that calls for the destruction of Israel. Can ultimate peace be achieved in this manner?

What are the facts?

The Root of the Middle East Conflict. Many observers of the Middle East scene seem to believe that the root of the Middle East conflict lies in the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews; and that it could be resolved by Israel's yielding its heartland, Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza strip for the creation of a Palestinian state and by returning the Golan Heights to Syria. They overlook that the hatred of the Palestinian Arabs toward the Jews long predates Israel's control over the administered territories.

> "Real peace...can only happen through complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block."

The Menace of Islamic Fundamentalism. The clamor for yielding these territories to the Arabs is the first step in the immutable Arab attempt to liquidate Israel altogether. Because certainly, Israel, with its fewer than 5 million inhabitants and less than 10,000 square miles of territory (smaller than Lake Michigan), cannot possibly be a threat to peace or a menace to the Arabs. And reducing the territory of Israel from 10,000 square miles to 7,000 square miles would not seem likely to bring peace one step closer. The main reason that real peace is so difficult to attain is the political and cultural context of the Middle East, which is dominated by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. Israel's size is not of importance; it is *the very existence* of Israel that is an intolerable offense to the fundamentalists, an unacceptable insult to Islam. The fundamentalist Moslems—Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and all the others—do not aim at peace with Israel or the recovery of some territory. Their publicly declared aim is the destruction of the Jewish state. The PLO, Israel's "partner for peace", has not disavowed this; on the contrary, in his speeches to Palestinians and other Arab audiences, Arafat constantly repeats his calls for "jihad" (holy war) and "liberation."

Real Peace Must be Global. Another reason that real peace will be difficult to attain in the present climate is that any agreement that could be attained in this round of negotiations would be a non-global one. The most fervent enemies of Israel—Iran, Iraq, Libya and the Palestinian rejectionists—not only do not participate in the negotiations, but vehemently oppose them. Those Arab statesman who have tried to come to terms with the Jewish state have invariably found a terrible end. King Abdullah of Transjordan was assassinated by the rejectionists, so was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and so was President Bashir Gemayel of Lebanon, all of whom envisioned peaceful cooperation and co-existence with Israel. One can only hope that President Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan, and Yassir Arafat himself will escape such fate.

In view of these realities, is real peace possible? Will Israel's yielding land and authority to the PLO bring it about? Islamic fundamentalism cannot tolerate a Jewish presence on *any part* of "Arab territory". One hopes that real peace—the Arabs' acceptance of a Jewish state and peaceful co-existence—will come eventually. But it cannot come about by Israel's yielding its strategic advantage to those who are still sworn to destroy it. It can only happen through a complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block, abandonment of fanatic fundamentalism, and change in governance from despotism to genuine democracy. And that may well take a very long time. In the meantime, Israel must keep up its guard and must not yield further strategic territory.

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Yes, I want [illegible]

South of the Border

I thoroughly enjoyed Ch[illegible] Rowland's "Laughter, Guns [illegible] Exploring" [September]. It was [illegible] learning to learn how all these [illegible] Mex (their locked back, AK-4[illegible] the road)? move to Juarez and [illegible] seen around and how the *ban[illegible]* and the *rancheros* get it in the [illegible] from the *putolocos* of the *mad[illegible]* The big fix is always in, and it'[illegible] *policias* and *la policia federal* wh[illegible] really in charge of the whole [illegible] *si*? How else could $200 bi[illegible] worth of *drogas* come barreling [illegible] of the desert and into *El Norte* [illegible] you? As much as it makes sen[illegible] assume that in Mexico widesp[illegible] corruption is required to tran[illegible] these drugs, doesn't it also m[illegible] sense to assume that the same s[illegible] corruption is required for the [illegible] Lerma of the Gulf in *El Norte* [illegible] this story would be nowhere ne[illegible] colorful as the one Bowden wa[illegible] tell, would it? No *sombreros*, no[illegible] *falsas* with dancing horses, no [illegible] no *corridos*—just *Americanos* st[illegible] into the trunks of their *corollas*.

Michael C. Seidel
Chalfont, Pa.

Dear Monsieur Science

In response to Thierry Souc[illegible] criticism [Letters, October] o[illegible] "flawed argument" during [illegible] Stringfellow case ["Toxic Dre[illegible] July], wherein I showed that a [illegible] Avon resident's exposure to chr[illegible] um was comparable to the amou[illegible] chromium in a vitamin supple[illegible] pill, I would like to make the fo[illegible] ing two points:

1. The evidence before the [illegible] in the Stringfellow case was [illegible] the inhabitants of Glen Avon [illegible] been exposed to trivalent chr[illegible] ium, not hexavalent, as Souc[illegible] [illegible] stated.

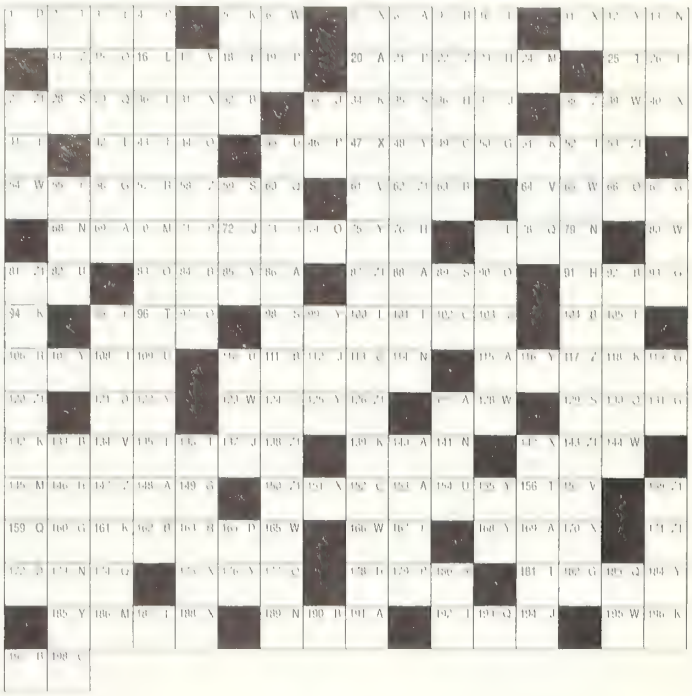
2. This is just the sort of "fl[illegible] argument" I would expect fr[illegible] citizen of a country whose id[illegible] environmental security is to [illegible] plode atomic bombs in Tahiti.

Robert E. Kelly Jr.
"Densely Muscled Attorney and [illegible]
[illegible] Angeles

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 156

By Thomas H. Middleton

The diagram, when filled in, will contain a quotation from a published work. The numbered squares in the diagram correspond to the numbered blanks under the WORDS. The WORDS form an acrostic: the first letter of each spells the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken. The letter in the upper right hand corner of each square indicates the WORD containing the letter to be entered in that square. Contest rules and the solution to last month's puzzle appear on page 63.



CLUES — WORDS

A. No way! Out of the question! (2 wds.) 86 88 153 69 148 169 115 / 191 8 127 140 20

B. Hermaphrodite 104 190 63 162 111 32 92 / 180 197 84 133

C. Big tops, e.g. 113 102 198 49 152

D. Mess, jumble, muddle 1 121 164 172

E. Tree or shrub of the birch family 42 135 18 41 3

F. Seaport, cap. of the Bahamas 101 26 167 105 95 55

G. Mediate; come between other things 50 56 160 131 149 182 93 119 / 67

H. Hard scab, as from a burn 91 178 36 146 23 76

I. Rat, stinker, wingless insect 108 124 57 192 73

J. Miss Prynne's first name (*The Scarlet Letter*) 72 137 103 194 31 112

K. Enlarges, makes greater 139 132 196 34 118 51 5 161 / 91

L. Telegraphs 77 30 16 100 187

M. Assumed name of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz 145 70 94 186

N. Progress in space 111 13 173 141 65 159 29

O. 1917 George M. Cohan song (2 wds.) 15 71 177 90 83 130 97 66 / 44

P. Challenge a judge or juror as disqualified because of bias 21 46 71 179 19 4

Q. Most narrow, most imminent 159 183 28 29 193 60 174

R. Stables and living quarters around a court yard or street 9 163 106 57

S. Artful, crafty, of keen penetration 35 98 129 89 59 28

T. Cure 96 2 136 156 181 75 10 43

U. Enlargement, violent outburst (hyph.) 15 109 154 110 82 33

V. Percolate, as water 17 134 61 157 64

W. Lacrimophrasso ceps. [illegible] with a religious ceremony (2 wds.) 60 166 54 163 59 144 123 195 / 128 6 80

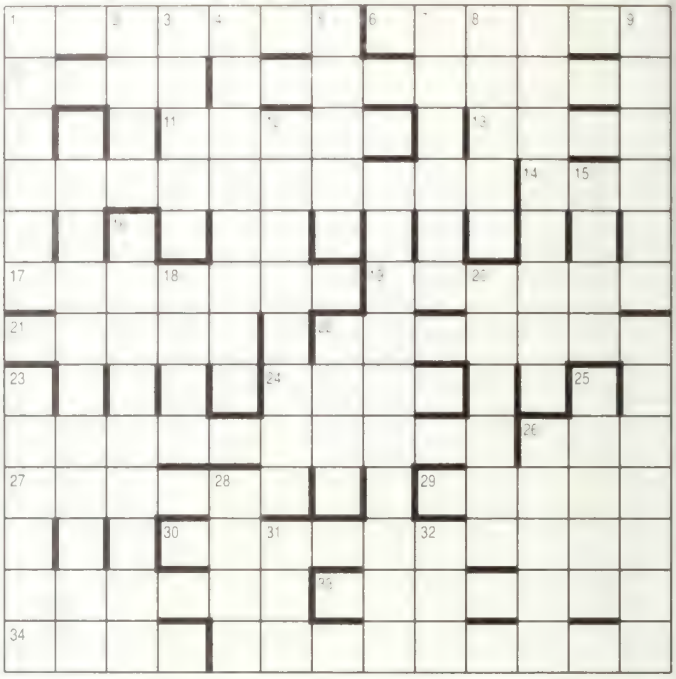
X. Bracketed [illegible] 142 30 41 173 188 7 31 101 / 11 170

Y. [illegible] 146 [illegible] 176 15 185 122 184 / 99 17 107 85

Z1. [illegible] 3 [illegible] 117 75 33 87 126 / 114 81 171 138

Fun and Games

By Richard Maltby Jr. and E. R. Galli
(with acknowledgments to James R. Fixx)



The ten questions listed separately are word games and trivia, not clues. Their answers are to be entered in the unclued locations in the diagram. Solvers are to determine where.

Clue answers include one proper name. 34A and 7D are obscure words. 6A is not in all dictionaries. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 63.

GAMES

a. What word contains all the vowels including Y in alphabetical order?
b. What is the shortest word containing all five vowels?
c. What nine-letter word contains only one vowel?
d. What word is suggested by II?
e. What single word is an anagram of Sondheim?
f. What word is suggested by B E D?
g. What word contains three consecutive sets of double letters?
h. What word is suggested by $\frac{S}{S}$?
i. What word has only two meanings, and they are direct opposites?
j. What word is suggested by $\frac{I}{O}O$?

ACROSS

6. Engineering student from Windy City, wearing sport shirt (6)
10. Word that shows what separates couth from uncouth? (4)
11. Be involved in small country-styled "Lampoon" (5)
13. Captured German stores: the winning advantage (4)
14. Shout of surprise: French [illegible] (3)
17. Transferable, as tense feeling (7)
19. Brain drains—they're the lowest! (6)
21. Kind of case that could cause a stir (5)
22. Deposit what belongs to us in not quite optimum financial institutions (7)
24. Orange peel relish (4)
26. Wrong rig holding me is rising (3)
27. People who decide what's right—right, or, at the outside, nearly fair? (6)
29. What famous music is? (5)
30. Aware of rewriting one letter per captive (10)
33. When Roosevelt carries a gun, he's playing around (7)
34. Old English occurrence is pretty defined on the inside (4)

DOWN

1. Junk food name thrown into fires (6)
2. Sally is a bit sesquipedalian (4)
3. Out like a light until shaken (5)
4. Angling, your bait gets the last word (8)
5. One gets to take out girl (5)
7. Monkey around Oz, one raising animal parasites (6)
8. Dead end for Indian faith (5)
9. Swells brought up to be equal of the French (6)
12. Likely size will require adjusting after bishop gets wet in church (8)
15. Hear superior take someone on (4)
16. Playing around, end without clothes on (9)
18. Kept within the limits of schlock, in fall (4)
20. Quietly witty nonsense—it can bring down the house! (6)
22. Look up under "low-budget buzzers" (4)
23. Purpose of protest . . . (6)
25. . . . is to be up the night before—I can't hold my liquor (5)
26. Very high streetwalker shows up drunk in street (5)
28. Guns make revolutions brief (4)
31. What makes wet wetter turns up wet (3)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Fun and Games," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by December 8. Readers of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will appear in the February 1996 issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Photo Finish," are Wally Harper, New York, New York; Mark Wallenstein, Cincinnati, Ohio; and Sally Leininger, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

What sober drivers everywhere are wearing this holiday season.



This red ribbon may be the most important statement you make during the holidays. Tied on your car, it expresses your commitment to sober driving. Please join us, along with MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), in our crusade against over 16,000 needless annual deaths caused by drinking and driving. Pick up a free ribbon from your Allstate Agent and safely, soberly tie one on. You're in good hands.

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